

OE D I P U S; King of *Thebes* : A TRAGEDY.

Translated from SOPHOCLES, with NOTES.

By Mr. THEOBALD.

*It cuique ratus, prece non ullâ
Mobilis, Ordo: Multis ipsum
Timuisse nocet: Multi ad fatum
Venere suum, dum Fata timent.*

Senec. in OEdip.



L O N D O N :

Printed for Bernard Lintott, at the *Cross-Keys* between
the two Temple Gates in Fleet-street. 1715.

OE D I P U S

King of Thebes :

A

TRAGEDY.

Translated from the Greek of Euripides.

By M. T. THOMAS.



LONDON:
Printed by J. G. ALLEN, 10, Bedford Square, W.C.
1884.



TO THE
RIGHT HONOURABLE
L E W I S
Earl of Rockingham;
Viscount Sondes of Lees-
court, and Baron of
Throwley.

MY LORD,



THE Honour I have ob-
tained in being permit-
ted to inscribe this Poem
to your Lordship, has
given me an Opportunity as well of
Publick

DEDICATION.

Publick Congratulation, as Acknowledgment; of rejoycing at the just Notice his Majesty hastaken of your Lordship's Merits, as of expressing my Gratitude for those vast and singular Benefits, which I owe to your Lordship's Greatness of Soul.

This is the first Trifle, my Lord, of my Production, for which I have presum'd to beg your Protection; tho' your Lordship vouchsaf'd to patronize the Author, (if I may so call it) almost from the Hour of his Birth. It is peculiarly known of your Lordship, by all that can profess to be acquainted with your Character, that wheresoever you condescend to give your Name, as it is an immediate Honour to the Parent, so you make it a certain Earnest

DEDICATION.

Earnest of your future Favour to the Child.

From this early Claim, as I grew up, I became intitled to your Lordship's Countenance and Protection: And permit me, my Lord, to boast of that chearing Influence from your Goodness, which secured me against those Calamities, that might have crush'd me, thro' the Loss of a Father, and a decaying Fortune.

Generosity never can act more powerfully, than when it is centred in a Nobleman's Breast; 'tis there, like Light, imbodyed in the Sun, that always refreshes the Object it shines on. Thus, my Lord, your Favour no sooner dawn'd on me, but it was seconded with real and solid Benefits. You bestow'd an
Education

DEDICATION.

*Education on me, I may justly style
Liberal, since for above seven
Years you were pleas'd to make
me a Companion for your Noble
Sons.*

*Nor has your Generosity been
confin'd to the Date of my Child-
hood, I still enjoy the Honour of
your Smiles, and feel the Effects of
an unwearied Bounty. As it would
be impossible for me to mention
every Particular, so, I know, no-
thing could more distaste your Lord-
ship's Modesty.*

*Yet, my Lord, the Obligations I
have confessed, are so literally
true, that I hope I may ap-
peal even to your Lordship's own
Breast; whether I have not strict-
ly obey'd your Commands, in ab-
staining*

DEDICATION.

flaming from all Approaches to Flattery.

There was no Room for an Address of that kind, where I had so strong and substantial Grounds for Admiration. All that I have yet mention'd is entirely owing to a Sense I ought always to preserve of such Obligations: Nor ought I in Silence to pass over those Applauses, which stand on Record, and usher in his Majesty's beginning Favours.

The World, as well as your Friends, my Lord, will now be convinc'd, that, however greatly your Lordship's Ancestors have deserv'd either of the Crown or their Country, Nobility of Descent is the least of your Praises. That
you

DEDICATION.

you are as true an Heir to the Virtues, as to the Dignities of your Family; and that by a firm and unwavering Constancy and Zeal for the Succession in the most Serene House of Hannover, by a hearty and pious Love of Liberty and Religion as by Law establish'd, by an ardent Desire and Activity in their Defence, your Lordship has increased and adorn'd the Lustre of your Line.

May his Majesty still with as great Discernment dispense his Promotions; and may your Lordship long live and flourish under these and greater Honours, to the Service of your Country, the Joy of your Offspring, and the Satisfaction of Numbers that stand indebted
to

DEDICATION.

to your Lordship's Goodness; but
of none more particularly than
of,

MY LORD,

Your Lordship's

most Devoted,

most Obedient, and

most Humble Servant,

Lew. Theobald.

Drama-

DEDICATION

Dramatis Personæ.

OEdipus, King of *Thebes*.

Creon, Brother to the Queen.

Tiresias, the Prophet.

High-Priest of *Jupiter*.

Messenger, from *Corinth*.

A *Theban Messenger*.

Old Shepherd.

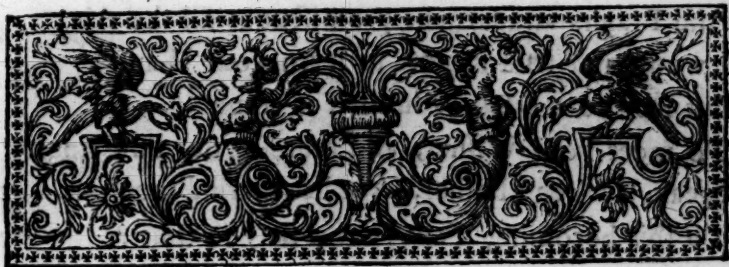
Chorus of *Thebans*.

Jocasta, the Queen.

Ismene
and
Antigone. } The two young Daughters of
OEdipus and *Jocasta*.

SCENE, before the Palace at *Thebes*.

OEDI



OEDIPUS.

ACT. I. SCENE I.

SCENE represents an Altar before the Palace: The High-Priests of JUPITER attended by a Croud of THEBANS, Young and Old, set ranged about the Altar.

OEDIPUS enters to them from the Palace.

O E D I P U S.



E Sons of *Thebes*, Descendants of old *Cadmus*,

Why sit you thus? Why all this Pomp
of Sadness?

These Boughs of Supplication in your
Hands,

And Garlands on your Heads? while *Thebes* around

B

From

From ev'ry Quarter sends up Clouds of Incense; 5
 And Pray'rs and Groans promiscuous fill the Air!
 I would not trust Report to learn your Wants;
 But see, your *OEdipus* himself is come
 To meet your Wishes, and redress your Suff'rings.
 Speak, Rev'rend Father, (Age has mark'd thee out 10
 To this becoming Task,) why sit you thus?
 Is there some instant Evil that you dread?
 Or has the Hand of Fate already crush'd you?
 My Soul is fond of easing all your Sorrows.
 Most stern of Heart and stubborn must I be, 15
 If this Assembly did not strongly move me.

High-Priest. O Royal *OEdipus*, Monarch of *Thebes*,
 Cast round your gracious Eyes; see, what a Train
 Of blended Supplicants croud to your Altars!
 Here some, whom Infant Nature yet denies 20
 Motion or Strength; here others, hallow'd Men,
 Whom Age has robb'd of their once boasted Vigour;
 'Mongst whom my self, the Priest of *Jove*, attend:
 And here, a Band of Youths, the Flow'r of *Thebes*!
 The Remnant of your People, crown'd like us, 25
 Sit in the *Forums*, at *Minerva's* Shrines,
 And the Prophetick Altars of *Apollo*.
 For, as your self have seen, our lab'ring City
 Sinks in the Storm of Fate; nor can she longer
 Raise her sick Head, and rise above the Waves. 30
 The fruitful Products of her Earth are blasted;
 Her grazing Flocks on the rank Herbage drop:
 And Mothers weep to see their Off-spring perish!

King of THEBES.

The Hand of Pestilence, stretch'd o'er our Heads,
Whirls round the fiery, all-consuming Sword ; 35
And lays the suff'ring Land of *Cadmus* waste :
While riotous Hell grows rich in our Destruction !
Not therefore that we count thee more than Man,
Or, as t' a God, do we approach thy Shrine ;
But as we judge thee well the first of Men, 40
In Visitations of the angry Pow'rs,
To stand betwixt us and the Wrath of Heav'n ;
For Thou already once hast rescued *Thebes*,
From the Exactions of voracious *Sphinx* ;
In which unaided and untaught by us, 45
You gave the Proof of a concurring God ;
And are esteem'd, and styl'd our Great Redeemer !
Wherefore, O sacred *OEdipus*, we now
With Pray'rs and prostrate Bodies turn to Thee,
To find out swift Relieif, or from the Voice 50
Of some declaring God, or humane Knowledge :
For I observe the dark Events of Time
Live in the Breath, and Counsels of the Wise.
Go on, thou Best of Men ; heal our sick State ;
Go on, and in our Cause consult thy Fame ; 55
The living Glory of thy former Acts,
That have aloud proclaim'd Thee *Thebes's* Saviour !
How shall the Mem'ry of those Virtues last,
If, once restor'd, we after fall to Earth ?
But, Oh ! confirm ; and plant us round with Safety. 60
Thy Infant Reign was gay, and crown'd with Fortune ;
Be still thy self, and shed diffusive Blessings !

If thou would'st still be King, 'tis better far
 To rule a Populous than empty State;
 What do our Tow'rs, or Naval Walls import, 65
 If unemploy'd, and destitute of Men!

OEdip. O my afflicted Children, well I know,
 Nor am a Stranger to, your pressing Anguish;
 I see you All are hard beset by Fate:
 But none of you, like Me, are bow'd with Sorrow. 70
 For all your Griefs are centred in your King;
 On Me alone the mighty Load is fall'n,
 And for my self, and you, and all the State,
 My Soul is wounded: Never have I slept,
 When *Thebes* demanded I should wake for her; 75
 But you are Witnesses how I have wept;
 And rack'd each painful Thought to give her Ease.
 One only Hope of Rescue did I find,
 And that I put in Practice; to the Dome
 Of *Pythian Phœbus*, *Creon* have I sent, 80
Menœceus' Son, my Kinsman, to enquire
 What Measures must be ta'en to free this City.
 Th' appointed Day for his Return is past;
 And I'm in pain to know what Cause detains him.
 But, when He comes, accuse Me, think Me vile, 85
 If I perform not what the God directs.

H. Priest. In good time, hast thou spoke; for now,
 the Youths
 In Whispers tell me, *Creon* is at hand.

OEdip. O dread *Apollo*! May his coming prove
 As prosp'rous to us, as his Looks are cheerful! 90

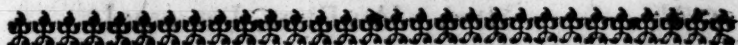
King of THEBES.

5

H. Priest. We may conjecture well, else had He not
With Laurel Chaplets thus adorn'd his Head.

OEdip. Soon shall we know; for hence I may address
Him;

O Royal Kinsman, Son of brave *Meneceus*,
What Tidings bring'st thou from th' oraculous God? 95



ACT I. SCENE II.

CREON, OEDIPUS, PRIESTS, and THEBANS.

Creo. Good:—Ev'n Calamities, aright dispos'd,
Turn their Complexion and become propitious.

OEdip. What mean those Accents which, forbidding
Fear,

Permit me not to hope?—

Creo. ————— Would you, my Liege,
That here I should disclose the God's Command; 100
Or shun the Croud, and in the Palace hear it?

OEdip. To All proclaim it; —It concerns the Publick;
And I have most at Heart the gen'ral Welfare.

Creo. Then thus the God directs; In Terms ex-
press,

He bids us drive Pollution from the Land; 105
The Curse we cherish; and no longer strive
With Ills that cannot otherwise be cur'd.

OEdip. What is the Curse? And how to be remov'd?

Creo. By Banishment or Death, to purge his Crime;
For Murther unreveng'd pollutes the City. 110

OEdip. Whose Crime? Where is the Man these
Horrors threaten?

Creo. My Lord, before you fill'd the Throne of
Thebes,

Laius was King. ———

OEdip. ——— Much of his Fame, I've heard;
Tho' never I beheld his Royal Face.

Creo. The Murtherers of Him, 'tis plain, the God 115
Commands us now to punish. ———

OEdip. ——— But where are they?
How shall we backward tread the Maze of Fate,
To trace the Marks of antiquated Guilt?

Creo. *Apollo* says, the Murth'ers lurk in *Thebes*;
Let us but beat their Bush, and out they bolt; 120
Unsearch'd, they'll keep their Hold, and sleep in Safety!

OEdip. Did *Laius* in his Palace, or abroad,
Or in some distant Country, meet his Death?

Creo. He went from Home in quest of Oracles;
(For so 'twas said) but ne'er return'd to *Thebes.* 125

OEdip. Did there no Messenger come back alive,
None of his Train, who could report his End?

Creo. All were destroy'd but One, who fled for Life;
And could but little vouch of what he saw.

OEdip. Each little Circumstance leads on to more, 130
When once our Hopes pursue the Tract of Truth.

Creo. He said, the King by Robbers was encounter'd,
And fell oppress'd by Numbers. ———

OEdip.

King of THEBES.

7

OEdip. ————— Did not Hire,
And promise of Reward, provoke the Dogs
To touch his Life ?

Creo. ————— It was suspected so ;
But *Laius* dead, the Matter rested there. 135

OEdip. When Royal Blood was shed, what instant
Curse
Stept in to intercept enquiring Justice ?

Creo. Just at that time, pernicious *Sphinxæ* began
Her riddling Malice ; and our present Care 140
Forc'd us to quit the Thoughts of past Afflictions.

OEdip. But I will sift this Matter from the Top :
Well has the God begun, and well has *Creon*
Discharg'd his Duty, for an injur'd King.
I will assist his Vengeance, will confirm 145

Apollo's Words, and rescue thee, O *Thebes* !
Nor is the Office of a distant kind ;
But for my self, I'll drag their Guilt to Light.
The sacrilegious Hands that struck at *Laius*,
At *OEdipus* may aim their second Blow : 150
Thus aiding Him, I shall my self secure.

Therefore, my People, rise, your Suit is heard,
And throw your supplicating Boughs away :
Go, summon all my *Thebans* to the Court,
Nought shall be left untry'd in your Redress : 155
I will pursue the Dictates of the God,
Will once again redeem, or perish with you !

[*Exeunt OEdipus and Creon.*]

ACT I. SCENE III.

HIGH-PRIESTS *and* THEBANS.

H. Priest. Come, let us rise, my Sons, for this alone,
Your gracious King has promis'd, came we here:
And may the God, whose Answer you have heard, 160
Prove our Preserver, and avert our Suff'rings!

[*Exeunt Priests with Thebans following.*]

ACT I. SCENE IV.

Enter the Chorus of Old Men of Thebes.

CHORUS.

I.

*Thou mystick Child of Jove, how art thou come
In Terror, from the Pythian Dome!
Fear does my doubting Sp'rits controul,
And Horrors chill my trembling Soul; 165
Great God of Pæans! Thou that dost dispence
Thy universal healing Influence,
Delian Monarch! we adore
Thy saving Pow'r;
But, Oh! — What untry'd Vengeance hast thou still in
store? 170*

Daughter

Daughter of Hope, to thee we make our Pray'r;
Immortal Oracle! Do thou declare:

Eternal Pallas, come away;

Thou Goddess of the Lawns and Groves, advance;
Whose Oval Dome does in our Forum stand, 175

Protectress of the Theban Land!

And Thou, dread Plutibus, bring thy powerful Lance;

Ye Triple Guardians, in Array

Descend! Confess your heav'nly Love,

As once you did sweet Mercy shew, 180

And snatch'd us from devouring Woe;

Again the same ador'd Protectors prove!

II.

For ev'ry Form of wild Distress
Does the devoted Soil of Thebes oppress;

Thro' all the Land a swift Contagion flies, 185

That unprevailing Art defies;

The pois'nous Taint hale Nature overpow'rs,

Blasts all her Buds, her Grain, and Flow'rs.

And on the Stalk, the Fruit unripen'd dies!

Our Nymphs invoke Lucina's Aid in vain, 190

And of unknown Pangs complain;

Our Men in Numbers drop, they sudden die,

And hasten to the Realms of gloomy Night:

Swift, as the Lightning darts across the Sky,

And thick, as Birds in Clusters wing their Flight! 195

Pale Death, in heaps, o'er-spreads our Plains,

And ev'ry Street of Thebes prophanes:

Abortive Infants on the Pavement lie,
The agonizing Mothers by,
scarce mourn their Children, e'er themselves they
die. 200
Whilst others to the Altars go,
To deprecate the common Woe,
The Voice of Sorrow, Praise, and Pray'r,
Together mount, and swell the lab'ring Air!

III.

Wherefore, thou venerable Child of Jove, 205
Attend our Suff'rings, and the Curse remove,
That lays us waste: This God of War,
That kills without a Sword or Spear.
Goddeſs! thy ſacred Aid diſpence,
And chaſe the peſtilential Demon hence; 210
Plunge him in Amphitrite's Oozy Bed,
Or where the rugged Seas of Thrace
Eternal Tempeſts raiſe,
Force him to hide his ignominious Head!
With reſſleſs Rage his venom'd Shafts he deals, 215
Laden with Ruine, and if e'er
Th' unactive Nights in Mercy ſpare,
The riſing Morn redoubled Horrors feels!

IV.

O ſacred Jove! Thy Bolts of Terror throw,
Thy fierceſt Lightnings on Him ſpend;
And thou, O Lycian King, prepare thy Bow,
And inſtant Reſcue ſend.

Join

King of THEBES.

11

Join to thy side Diana's Pow'rs,
The Goddess that o'er Lycian Mountains scours;
Who whirls her Darts that never stray,
And bears down ev'ry Beast of Prey.
Thee, ruddy Bacchus, I invoke, around
Whose Temples is a Golden Fillet bound;
Who do'st thy Birth from Thebes derive:

225

And th' Enthusiastick Train

230

To Nocturnal Orgies drive;

Approach with thy Torch,
And the Demon scorch;

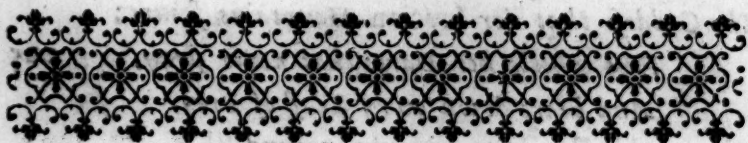
The God, whom Men abhor and Gods disdain!

End of the First ACT.



B 6.

ACT



ACT II. SCENE I.

OEDIPUS and CHORUS.

OEdip. **Y**OU pray with Fervor. But, if you will hear

The Counsel I shall lend, you may perhaps
Obtain your Wishes and avert your Ills.

'Tis true, I come a Stranger to the Fact,
Its Time and Manner; yet I would not waste

Th' important Hour in unsuccessful Search,
Unless some Marks led on to the Discov'ry.

But now my self a Denizen of *Thebes*,
Do thus pronounce to all my Fellow *Thebans*.

Whoe'er amongst you be a Witness, how

Laius, the Son of *Labdacus*, was slain;

I charge him to discover all he knows.

And lest he fear, that to confess his Guilt,

Be to incur the Rigour of the Law;

Behold, I bid him throw that Fear to Earth.

No further Sentence shall affect his Crime,

Than, quiet and unhurt, to quit the Land.

Or if there be amongst you one that knows

Some foreign Hand in this black Deed concern'd;

Let him produce the Traytor, and receive

20
The

King of THEBES.

13

The Favour, Thanks, and Bounty of a King.
But if thro' Fear, or for your selves, or Friends,
A disobedient Silence bind your Tongues,
Hear then what I pronounce! Let none presume,
Where *OEdipus* bears Rule, the horrid Wretch 25
To harbour or approach; but let his Presence
Break off your Pray'rs, prevent your Sacrifice,
And your intended Expiations stop:
With him, no Commerce hold; but from your Houses
All drive him out; for he's the Plague of *Thebes*, 30
And so the *Delphian* God, but now, has spoke him.
Thus then have I decreed, the God t' obey,
And a King's Blood t' atone: But for the Man
Who, single or assisted, did the Deed;
Let him drag out a weary Life accurst! 35
And may the same dire Imprecation light,
In all its full Extent, on me and mine;
If I am conscious that the Murth'rer lurks
Within these Walls. Now I agen conjure you,
Unite your Counsels to detect the Villain, 40
For Me, and for the God, and this poor Land
Which Pestilence o'er-runs, and makes a Defart!
Nay, had *Apollo* not enjoyn'd the Task,
Yet when the best of Men, a Monarch too,
Was impiously destroy'd; It was not just 45
To leave his Death unquestion'd, unreveng'd,
But search the Traytor out. It lyes on me;
Me, who succeed him in his Throne and Bed,
Enjoy his Consort; and had Fate allow'd

Him;

Him Issue, should have been their common Sire! 50
 But since the niggard Pow'rs deny'd him Sons,
 I will supply the Want; and in his Vengeance
 Labour, as for my Father, till I find
 The Authors of his Death: And hear me, Gods,
 Give Sanction to my Wish! Whoe'er opposes, 55
 Or to his Pow'r affixt not my Design,
 The gen'ral Curse of Barrenness fall on him,
 And blast his Land and Bed! Our present Plague
 Shed its collected Venom on his Head;
 Or, if there be a worse, be that his Portion! 60
 But, to those loyal *Thebans* who approve
 The Course of my Revenge; Eternal Justice,
 And all the Pow'rs of Heav'n, be still propitious! —

Chor. My gracious Lord, t' evade th' extensive Curse
 Which you have fix'd on all, I must declare 65
 I'm guiltless of the Fact, nor know its Authors;
 But *Phœbus*, that enjoy'd the dark Enquiry,
 Should have inform'd our Doubts. —

OEdip. ——— Yet grant, he should;
 Gods are not to be forc'd, against their Wills.

Chor. I could perhaps a second Means propose. 70

OEdip. Spare not to tell whate'er thy Thoughts suggest.

Chor. Next to th' Oraculous God, my Liege, I know
Tiresias stands acquainted with the Fates;
 From whom whoe'er enquires Mysterious Truth
 Departs not uninform'd. ———

OEdip. ——— In this, my Friends, 75
 My Care has not been wanting; *Creon* counsell'd;

King of THEBES

25

And twice have I the Prophet summon'd hither :
'Tis strange, he comes not yet.—

Chor. ——— For, what Report
In common vents, is wild and Inconsistent.

OEdip. To what Report dost thou allude? By Hea-
ven,

I will examine every Breath of Fame.

Chor. It has been said, he fell attack'd by Men
That met him on the Road.

OEdip. ——— I heard the same ;
But none that saw the Fact have yet appear'd.

Chor. The Wretch that's conscious to himself of
Guilt,

Hearing the dreadful Curse you have denounc'd,
Will fly to unload the Horrors of his Breast.

OEdip. Whom Guilt could never scare, Words will
not fright !

Chor. He comes, that can detect the latent Traytor !
Behold, they lead the sacred Prophet on,
Who only of Mankind knows hidden Truth.



ACT II. SCENE II.

OEDIPUS, CHORUS, and TIRESIAS led.

Oedip. Divine *Tiresias* ! whose all-searching Mind
Dives into Mystic Fate's remotest Councils ;
Soars up to Heav'n, or pierces to the Centre.

Who

Who, tho' thou see'st not with frail mortal Eye, 95
 Yet with more perfect and internal Light
 View'st the Distress of thy distemper'd *Thebes*;
 Of which from Thee alone she hopes a Cure.
 For *Phœbus*, if perchance thou hast not heard,
 When late we to the *Tripes* sent, reply'd, 100
 Our only Expectation of Redress,
 Must be to find the Murtherers of *Laius*;
 And found, with Death or Banishment to punish!
 Therefore with-hold not Aid; but urge thy Skill;
 Provoke thy chatt'ring Birds, and ev'ry Pow'r 105
 Of Divination rowze, to rescue *Thebes*,
 Thy self, and me, from Guilt, Pollution, Blood!
 On thee, our last Reserve of Hope is fix'd;
 And glorious is the Task, when in our Pow'r,
 To succour the Distress'd, and raise from Ruine! 110
Tire. Alas!—How burthen some is Knowledge then,
 When it is more expedient not to know!
 Foreseeing, I have plung'd into the Snare;
 And ought not to have come.—

OEdip. ———What means this Sadness?
 Hast thou a Cause to grieve at coming here? 115

Tire. Permit me to depart; be counsell'd, Sir;
 We both shall better bear our wayward Fates.

OEdip. Justice and Gratitude forbid, *Tiresias*,
 By Silence to deprive your Native Soil
 Of that Redress. your knowing Voice might give. 120

Tire. For I foresee your Words are out of time;
 And fear to fall into the like Offence:

Chor.

King of THEBES.

17

Chor. Now, by the Gods conceal not what you know :
Humbly we throw our Bodies at your Feet,
And beg you to disclose the Fate of *Thebes*. 125

Tire. By Heav'n, you are not wise ; nor shall you urge me
To wound your Ears with Words of piercing Horror.

OEdip. What say'st thou ? Dost thou know , and
wilt not speak ;

But art determin'd to betray the Land,
And obstinately give us up to Ruine ? 130

Tire. Because I would not grieve thee, or my self,
Why is it rashly turn'd to my Reproach ?

When, should I speak, thou would'st not lend an Ear,

OEdip. Thou stubborn, vile old Wretch ! (for thou
wouldst move

A Stone to Wrath ;) wilt thou not yet declare ? 135

But, unconcern'd, persist in dumb Destruction ?

Tire. 'Tis you persist to load me with Reproach ;
To call Me Dumb and Stubborn ; but are blind
To your own Weakness, and unjust Resentment !

OEdip. What Mortal can keep down his struggling
Soul, 140

That hears thee trifle thus ? that sees thee bent
On Ruine, and Dishonour to thy Country ?

Tire. For Fate will work its way, tho' I am silent.

OEdip. You ought then to declare, what must be
known.

Tire. I will no more reveal, tho' still thou rage, 145
And kindle up a-fresh Disdain and Anger.

OEdip.

OEdip. Then Passion shall have room : I will no longer
 Suppress my Thoughts ; but know, — I hold thee, Traytor,
 A foul Complotter of this horrid Deed ;
 Laden with all the Guilt, but of the Act ; 150
 And only free of that, by wanting Eyes ;
 Could'st thou have seen, thy self alone had done it !

Tire. O Righteous Imputation ! — Hear me, King ;
 I tell thee, thou art fall'n within the reach
 Of thy own Imprecation ; from this Day 155
 'Twill be a Crime in *Thebes*, a Crime in me,
 To change a Word with guilty *OEdipus* ;
 Who stands accurst, and is his Country's Bane.

OEdip. Ha ! Dar'st thou with audacious Terms to
 brand

The Dignity of Kings ? And can'st thou hope, 163
 Licentious as thou art, to 'scape unpunish'd ?

Tire. Yes : — I am arm'd in Truth, and laugh at Dan-
 ger.

OEdip. Whence didst thou learn this contumelious Out-
 rage ?
 'Tis not thy Divination dictates this.

Tire. No, thou didst dictate to me ; urge me on, 165
 Against my Will, to speak th' unwelcome Truth.

OEdip. What Truth ? Pronounce again, instruct me
 further.

Tire. Hast thou not understood its dire Import,
 Or is the Repetition meant t' ensnare ?

OEd. I have not understood ; proceed t' inform me. 170

Tire. I said, thou wert the Murth'rer of the Man,
 Whose

Whose Murtherer thou seek'st. —

OEdip. ——— Thou shalt not boast

Of having twice insulted me, unpunish'd.

Tire. Nay then, to raise thy Anger higher, know —

OEdip. Speak, what thy Malice dares; It shall have
way. 175

Tire. Unknowing, thou do'st act abhorr'd Pollutions;
With thy own Blood; art fall'n into the Snare
Of winding Fate, nor see'st the Cords that hold thee!

OEdip. Think'st thou to triumph still in Insolence? —

Tire. If there be Strength in mighty Truth, I do. 180

OEdip. Strength is in Truth, but Truth is not in thee;
Thou trebly blind, in Eyes, in Ears, and Soul!

Tire. Weak Man! t' upbraid me with that want of Sight,
Which ev'ry one shall soon reproach in thee.

OEdip. Thy Darkness is thy Guard; but had'st thou
Eyes, 185

Thou should'st not long enjoy their cheering Light:
Nor live to taunt at me, or ought besides.

Tire. It is not in my Fate, to fall by thee;

Phæbus alone is Master of my Days.

OEdip. Yet tell me, do'st thou from thy self divulge 190

This canker'd Tale, or is it *Creon's* Fiction?

Tire. Lay not on *Creon*, what belongs to thee.

OEdip. O Wealth! O Royalty! and thou great Art
Of Wisdom, above Arts! ye specious Blessings,
That list your Fav'rites to superior Glory; 195
What Envy does pursue th' uneasy Rife?

Thus from the Throne to which, by me unsought,

I by

I by the gen'ral Suffrage was preferr'd,
Creon, my faithful, honest, prim'tive Friend,
 Burns in his treach'rous Soul, to thrust me down: 200
 Suborning this Magician's Hireling Voice,
 This juggling, envious, Market-hunting Wizard;
 Who blind to Knowledge of pretended Art,
 Gropes only after Gain; For tell me, Dotard,
 In what art thou a Prophet? wherefore then, 205
 When rav'nous *Sphynx* propos'd her fatal Riddles,
 Did not thy Art redeem the lab'ring Land?
 Yet this was Divination's proper Task,
 And not the Province of a vulgar Man;
 But *Augury* was mute, your Gods perverse, 210
 And Knowledge at a stand! — 'till I advanc'd,
 Plain *OEdipus*, unskill'd in future Fate,
 And rude of Divination; yet inspir'd
 To rescue *Thebes*, I trusted to my self;
 Exerted all my Energy of Soul; 215
 And, deaf to Birds prognosticating Nonsense,
 Solv'd the dark Mystry, and preserv'd your Land:
 Yet Me you would dethrone; big with an Hope,
 That thou shalt sit at *Creon's* Royal Elbow;
 And be the worthy Substitute of Pow'r! 220
 But thou, and the Complotter of thy Treason,
 Shall dearly rue the sought Preheminence;
 And did not Pity plead for hoary Age,
 Thou should'st e'er this have felt the weight of Justice.

Chor. If we our humble Thoughts might inter-
 pose,

225
 Rage

Rage seems on either side to fill your Breasts ;
And dictate to your irritated Tongues.
It ought not to be thus. You rather both
Should bend your Wisdoms to unravel Fate,
And extricate the God's myſterious Meaning. 230

Tire. What tho' you awe the Crowd with Regal
Pow'r,

I have a right of Speech, as uncontroll'd,
And large, as any boasted Lord of Empire!
I ſerve not thee, but am *Apollo's* Priſt,
Nor e'er ſhall court the Patronage of *Creon*. 235

But thou, that haſt reproach'd my Want of Eyes,
Be cauſe thy Sight feaſts on gay Nature's Objects,
Yet to thy ſelf and Miſeries art blind ;

Not conſcious where thou dwell'ſt, nor yet with whom ;
Know'ſt thou the Parents that begot thee, King? 240

And that thou liv'ſt a Cauſe of Execration
Both to thy Race, that draw the vital Air,
And thoſe that howl below and rue thy Birth ?

A Father's, and a Mother's hov'ring Curſe
Surround, and ſoon ſhall chaſe thee from the Land : 245

Not glaring on the chearful Sun, as now ;
But loſt in Night, and curſt, like me, with Darkneſs !

And then what Shores, what Vales, what new *Citharon*,
What Mountains ſhall not echo to thy Groans !

When thou art taught the Horrors of thy Wedlock ; 250
How thou art wreck'd on Love's forbidden Coaſt :

When all the Train of Miſchiefs, yet unknown,
Confront thy ſtartled Soul, and ſet to view

The

The Plagues that wait thee, and thy fatal Offspring.
Now rave, and dart thy frantick Accusations 255

At me and *Creon*; but the Pow'rs ne'er form'd
A Wretch more horrid, more accurst than thou art.

OEdip. Gods! Must I bear all this, and still be patient?

Why does not swift Perdition overtake,
And rid me of the Garb-protected Railer? 260

Get thee to Hell, or any where from hence;
Back to thy hated House, and mutter there.

Tire. Hadst thou not sent, I scarce had sought for
Thee.

OEd. Could I have dreamt, thou hadst ingender'd
Poisons,

Thou should'st not here have shed thy envious Folly. 265

Tire. Howe'er my Folly may appear to thee
Thy Parents thought me wise. —

OEdip. — Who were they? speak;
I charge thee, stay, inform me whence I sprang.

Tire. This Day shall clear thy Birth, and prove thy
Bane.

OEdip. How intricate and dark are all thy Words! 270

Tire. Thou art the best Interpreter of Riddles!

OEdip. Am I reproach'd for what has been my Glory?

Tire. The Fate that rais'd thee, but prepar'd thy Ruin.

OEdip. If, saving *Thebes*, I fall, then welcome Ruin! —

Tire. I will return: — conduct me homewards,
Boy. 275

OEdip. 'Tis well: — for, present, thou disturb'st our
Work; Remov'd,

Remov'd, we shall again obtain Repose.

Tire. Fear not, I'll leave you, now I have reveal'd
What I came here to speak ; without Regard,
Or Awe of Grandeur ; for thou can'st not kill me. 280
In thee, I have produc'd the Wretch you fought,
With Menaces pursu'd and furious Edicts,
For *Laius* Death, and Thou alone art He :
A Foreigner, and Stranger falsely deem'd,
For strait thou shalt appear a *Theban* born, 285
And Native to the place ; nor shalt thou taste
A light Affliction, or enjoy Distress ;
Then shall thy Beams of Sight be quench'd, and dark ;
Thy self, thrown from thy Pow'r and stript of Plenty,
Shalt on a Staff support thy guilty Age ; 290
To foreign Lands bend thy devoted Steps ;
And at each Door seek thy dependant Morsel !
For to thy Children thou at once shalt be
A Brother, and a Sire ! to Her that bore thee
An Husband, and a Son ! and to thy Father 295
A Parricide, and foul Adulterer !
Go now, and muse on these predicted Horrors ;
And, if thou find'st me, in a Tittle, false,
Proclaim me void of Knowledge, and no Prophet.

[*Exeunt* OEdip. and *Tiresias* led, severally.]

ACT.

ACT II. SCENE III.

CHORUS

I.

Where is the Wretch, whom from his dark Abode 302

The Delphian Prophet has arraign'd;

Whose horrid Hands and Soul are stain'd

With a sacred Monarch's Blood.

'Tis time, he mount his fiery Steed,

Or outfly the Whirlwind's Speed: 305

For, arm'd with Lightning, the fierce God of Day,

Jove's Son, pursues his hunted Prey,

Vengeful Fates, and Curses strong

Attend, and with the Godhead scour along!

II.

A strict Injunction does Apollo send 310

From high Parnassus' snowy Head;

And thro' the Land the Charge is spread

To detect the latent Fiend.

Where he in Woods, or Mountains roves,

Lurks in Dens, or Gloomy Groves: 315

And, like a Bull stray'd from the Pasture, bounds;

And traverses the lonely Grounds,

From th' Orac'lous Horrors fled

Which, shun'd, pursue; and flutter round his Head!

III. The

III

The learned Augur, skill'd in Fate, 320
 Does a dreadful Scene relate;
 Can we the guilty Tale receive?
 May we the Prophet disbelieve?
 My wav'ring Soul floats on th'uncertain Tide,
 Hopes erect, and Doubts divide! 325
 Officious Fame did never yet declare
 That any Wars were wag'd,
 Or intestine Discord rag'd,
 'Twixt Labdacus's Son, and Corinth's Heir.
 Where shall my anxious Faith repose, 330
 How the horrid Tale disclaim,
 How rescue OEdipus from Shame,
 And Laius' Murth'ers to the World disclose?

IV.

Immortal Jove, and his great Son
 Working Fate discern alone: 335
 But whether Prophets better ken
 Its dark Decrees, than vulgar Men,
 My doubting Judgment cannot well decide.
 Tho' in Wisdom some may pride,
 And a superior Wit and Genius share, 340
 Till stronger Proofs attest,

G

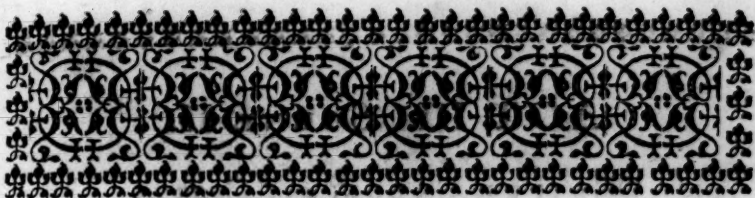
Shall

Shall I lend my cred'lous Breast
 To such as would the Royal Name impair?
 I saw, when Sphynx attack'd the Land
 How his Wisdom sav'd the State;
 His Virtues shone! I ne'er can rate
 Him ill, who did the Wreck of Thebes withstand.

End of the Second ACT.



ACT



ACT III. SCENE I.

CREON and CHORUS.

Creo. **Y**E Men of *Thebes*, I heard the furious King
Had, in opprobrious Terms, with heavy Crimes

Traduc'd my suff'ring Virtue; and I come
To shake the heinous Imputation off:

If he suspects that I, in Word or Act,
Have added to the Weight of his Distress;

I am no longer covetous of Life

O'erwhelm'd with Accusations. 'Tis a Charge

Brands my fair Name with Infamy and Horror,

If *Thebes*, or you, my Friends, account me vile. 10

Chor. Perhaps his Soul believes not the Reproach,
But hasty Passion struck out harsh Expressions.

Creo. Did he not say, that I suborn'd the Priest
To falsify his Art, and blacken him?

Chor. But yet perhaps he meant not what he said. 15

Creo. Why? Did he not with stern and stedfast Eye
Confirm his labour'd Phrase, and urge my Falsehood?

Chor. A Prince's Thoughts are sacred to himself,
And ought not to be scan'd: But He appears.

ACT III. SCENE II.

OEDIPUS, CREON, and CHORUS.

OEdip. Ha! Traytor, art thou here? Has pow'rful
Guilt

20

So braz'd thy Conscience that thou dar'st approach
My injur'd Roof, and triumph in Dishonour?

'Tis plain, thou wert the Murtherer of *Laius*.

And subt'ly hast conspir'd t'usurp my Throne.

Now, in the Name of all the righteous Gods,

25

When thou didst set on foot this rash Design,

Did *OEdipus* appear a Fool or Coward,

To countenance thy Fraud? Or could'st thou think

I should not trace thy Treasons, or repel them?

Dost thou not blush to own the mad Attempt

30

Of grasping at a Crown, without the Aid

Of Friends or Armies to espouse Rebellion?

The Nerves of Pow'r, and Spurs to Usurpation!

Creo. Are you a Man, whom Reason ought to sway?

Let me be heard, my Lord, and then be censur'd.

35

OEdip. I know your Rhet'rick's good, but I am ill
At list'ning to the dawb'd Defence of Him

Who still has bore me hard, and scorn'd my Pow'r.

Creo. But lend me for a while your patient Ear.

OEdip. But strive not then to shuffle off your Treasons.

40

Creo.

Creo. To think that stubborn Obstinacy's good
In any Cause, by Reason unmaintain'd,
Argues a Mind distemper'd and unsound.

OEdip. To think thou may'st betray thy Trust and
Friend,
And 'scape the Fury of his just Resentment; 45
Argues a Mind more sickly and unsound.

Creo. I grant the Maxim; but wherein, my Lord,
Have I deserv'd your Hate?

OEdip. ————— Didst thou persuade me,
Or didst thou not, that it was fit I sent
To that old, doting, venerable Wizard? 50

Creo. I did; and still persist that it was fit.

OEdip. How long do you compute it since that *Laius*—

Creo. Did what? I apprehend you not.

OEdip. ————— Was slain?

Creo. A Race of circling Years have interven'd.

OEdip. Did then the Prophet exercise this Art? 55

Creo. Ev'n then, as wise and as rever'd as now.

OEdip. Did he in former times e'er mention me?

Creo. Never that I have heard.

OEdip. ————— But yet you did

Enquire, and search to find th'Assassins out?

Creo. Enquire we did, but never could detect. 60

OEdip. Why did not then his Wisdom trace the
Authors?

Creo. I know not; Silence therefore best becomes me.

OEdip. But what concerns your self, you can but know;
And if you would oblige me, might confess.

Creo. Of what? I'll not deny the thing I know. 65

OEdip. That if *Tiresias* had not join'd with you
In envious Counsel, and complotted Slander,
He had not tax'd me with the Blood of *Laius*!

Creo. You best can tell, if he have own'd as much:
But now let me have room to question you. 70

OEdip. Go on; you cannot make me an Assassin.

Creo. Is not my Sister Partner of your Bed?

OEdip. 'Tis granted.

Creo. ——— And with her, in equal Sway,
You rule the Land of *Thebes*?

OEdip. ——— So large her Pow'r,
She need but wish, and in that Wish command. 75

Creo. And I, with both, enjoy the Thirds of Pow'r?

OEdip. Ay, there thy specious Friendship stands con-
fess,

And Treach'ry, and abhorr'd Ambition blaze!

Creo. Not so, if you with Reason weigh the point;
Knock at your Breast, and ask your conscious Heart,
If it would chuse a Crown possess'd with Fear,
Rather than hold the same degree of Pow'r,
And sleep in Ease and unmolested Safety.

My Soul feels not so wild a Lust of Rule,
As to prefer the empty Name of King 85

To truly Regal Sway. No modest Spirit

But must prefer the blissful downy State.

So now from thee I all the Sweets enjoy,

Preheminence could yield: Nay, if I reign'd,

Perhaps the strict necessity of Pow'r

90

Might

Might drive me on some Acts I most abhorr'd.
 How then can Royalty have greater Charms
 Than equal Rule, without the Thorns of Empire?
 I bear not so deprav'd an Appetite,
 As not to prize the Good, which bears its Gain. 95
 Now Dignity and Pleasure flow around me,
 All court th'Advantage of my exalted State:
 And making me their Advocate to you,
 Thro' my Address hang on the Royal Ear,
 And have their Wishes crown'd! Shou'd I then quit 100
 These real Blessings for a painful Gewgaw?
 Who hunts a false Ambition is not wise:
 For me, I never hearken'd to its Lure,
 Nor would assist the Man that would pursue it.
 If farther you require to be convinc'd 105
 From *Delphi* be resolv'd; ask of the God,
 If I aright his Oracle reported:
 And if you find I have plotted ought
 Against you with *Tiresias*, let me fall,
 Not by your Suffrage only, but my own. 110
 But for a light ungrounded Jealousy,
 Hold me not disaffected to your Throne.
 It is not just to censure Men at random,
 And of their Faults or Virtues rashly judge:
 For lightly to displace a worthy Friend, 115
 Is 'gainst our selves to turn the murth'ring Sword,
 And dispossess our Souls. Time must determine,
 Time only can the virtuous Man declare;
 But a short Day unmasks the shallow Villain!

Chor. Well has he spoke; O sacred Sir, avoid
Rash Errors: For unsafe is sudden Wisdom.

OEdip. If sudden Snares are laid to catch my Life,
I must as swiftly guard against the Danger:

For if Prevention sleep, the active Train
Will work its Ends, and frustrate my Revenge. 125

Creo. Dost thou attempt to chase me from the Land?

OEdip. No; for I would not have thee 'scape, but dye.

Creo. When you can shew that I deserve my Death.

OEdip. Still art thou insolent, perverse and stubborn?

Creo. Because I see thee take unwholsome Coun-
sels. 130

OEdip. Most wholsome for my self.

Creo. ————— Justice commands
Thou should'st as equally consult for me.

OEdip. But thou hast been a Traytor.

Creo. ————— How if you
In jealous Thought have only coin'd me such?

OEdip. Still I've a Monarch's Right to rule thy
Fate. 135

Creo. No lawless Right o'er me, a Prince, as thou art.

OEdip. Thebes! Thebes!

Creo. ————— I likewise have a Share in Thebes.

Chor. Be calm, my Princes; See, in happy time
Royal Jocasta from the Palace comes;
Whose Presence must allay this hot Debate. 143

ACT III. SCENE. III.

JOCASTA, OEDIPUS, CREON and CHORUS.

Joc. Ye wretched Men, wherefore is all this Rage?
Why is Diffension kindled to a Flame?
Do you not blush, when all the Land is sick,
To quarrel, and indulge a private Grief?
Retire, my Lord; and, *Creon*, quit the place; 145
Let us not aggravate a light Distress,
And swell it to a Storm.

Creo. ——— Sister, the King
Is pleas'd t'inforce me to a rigid Choice;
Or to forsake the Land, or staying Die.

OEdip. I urge it: O *Jocasta*, I have found him 150
Practise against my Life, my Fame, and Honour.

Creo. Let me not prosper, Gods! but fall accurst,
If e'er I had a Thought of what you tax me!

Joc. O by the heav'nly Pow'rs, my Lord, believe him;
Let the great Gods he has invok'd, and me. 155
And these our Friends be Vouchers of his Truth.

Chor. My Liege, let us intreat you to be calm.

OEdip. What! would'st thou have me servilely submit?

Chor. Regard the Man whom Folly never yet
Seduc'd to rash Misdeeds; and who, but now, 160
Has call'd the Gods to witness to his Faith.

OEdip. Dost know what thou would'st have?

Chor. ——— I do, my Lord.

OEdip. What is't?

Chor. ————— Not with Dishonour to discard
A trusty Friend, upon a light Suspicion.

OEdip. Be certain, what thou urgest gives me up 165
To instant Death, or Banishment from *Thebes*.

Chor. No, by the sacred and all-seeing Sun:
So let me be forsaken by all Friends,
And hated by the unassisting Gods;
Feel all the dire Extremes of sharp Affliction, 170
If I would urge it on a Thought like that.
But oh! the Sorrows of the suff'ring Land
Sit heavy on my Soul: and in your Discord
The Wounds of *Thebes* are rent, and bleed afresh.

OEdip. Do what you will: if *OEdipus* must fall, 175
Or in Dishonour be expell'd the Land;
Yielding to you, I run the desp'rate Hazard:
For Him, where-e'er he goes, my Hate pursues.

Creo. Rigid Compliance! Where would end this Hate,
Wert thou to give a loose to frantick Passion? 180
Nature, like thine, is to it self a Burthen.

OEdip. Wilt thou not then depart and give me Peace?

Creo. I go; and from this Moment I renounce
All Tyes of Blood, Faith, or Allegiance to thee:
But to my Countrymen, shall still be *Creon*. 185

[*Exit Creon.*]

ACT

ACT III. SCENE IV.

OEDIPUS, JOCASTA, and CHORUS.

Chor. My royal Mistress, will you not persuade
Your troubled Lord to seek Repose within?

Joc. Yes, when I have enquir'd his Cause of Anguish.

Chor. Ill-grounded Rumors kindled up Unkindness,
And causeless Accusations vex'd their Souls. 190

Joc. Did mutual Provocations feed Dissension?

Chor. Too much, I fear.

Joc. ————— What Terms of Anger rose?

Chor. O, let the private Perturbation cease,
The Griefs of *Thebes* will take up all our Souls.

OEdip. Take heed, old Man, how thou disturb'st my
Mind, 195
Nor with Neglect look on thy King's Afflictions.

Chor. How have my Words giv'n way to a Distrust?
Have I not labour'd to disclose my Breast?
O! I must bid adieu to Sense and Reason,
When I the Royal *OEdipus* neglect. 200

Thou, when poor *Thebes* lay gasping, half destroy'd,
Didst from the Gripe of Ruin snatch her back,
And raise her up to Life: So would'st thou now,
If it might be, restore the fainting State.

Joc. Let me conjure you by the Gods, my Lord, 205
Disclose the fatal Cause of your Resentments.

OEdip. I'll tell thee (for in Thee my Cares are centred)

What Treasons *Creon* had devis'd against me.

Joc. Ay, tell me, if you know that he was vile.

OEdip. He says, I am the Murtherer of *Laius*. 210

Joc. Spoke it he from himself, or as he heard?

OEdip. He had suborn'd the Prophet to the Lye;
And practises on ev'ry Tongue in *Thebes*

To spread the same detested Defamation.

Joc. Think on't no more, my Lord, but list to me, 215

And learn a Truth, of which I shall produce

A noted Instance, that no Mortal Pow'r

Can certainly devine of things to come.

Laius had once an Oracle (but whether

Giv'n by the God, or by his Priests, I know not) 220

That from a Son to spring from him and me,

'Twas in the Fates that he should meet his Death:

Yet him, as Fame reported, Robbers slew

Where three Ways met. The dreaded Son, when born,

E'er the third Night descended on his Cradle, 225

Was, with a Cord bor'd thro' his Infant Feet,

Giv'n out to be expos'd on some bleak Mountain.

Thus were *Apollo's* Menaces o'erthrown;

The guilty Infant could not live to kill

His Sire, or *Laius* dread the threatned Fate. 230

Yet Oracles had firmly doom'd his Murther:

Therefore, my Lord, mind not their idle Terrors.

What Heav'n has in his Wisdom said, Shall be,

His own performing Hand with Ease fullfils.

OEdip. Fatal *Jocasta*! O thy Words have rais'd 235

An Earthquake here, and shatter'd all my Soul.

Joc.

Joc. What new Commotion heaves thy troubled Breast?

OEdip. Methoughts I heard thee say, *Laius* was slain
Where three Ways met ———

Joc. ——— For so Report was current;
And holds the same.

OEdip. ——— But say, where lyes the place, 240
In which this most accursed Act was done?

Joc. In *Phocis*, where the triple-cleaving Roads
Unite from thence, from *Delphi*, and from *Daulia*.

OEdip. How long is't since? ———

Joc. ——— The Tidings came to *Thebes*,
But just e'er you arriv'd and sav'd the State. 245

OEdip. Immortal Gods! what do your Pow'rs intend?

Joc. But why these Starts, and sudden Thought, my
Lord?

OEdip. Enquire not yet, but tell me of this *Laius*;
What was his Mien, his Stature, and his Age?

Joc. Big made; and Time had just o'er-snow'd his
Head; 250

In Features not unlike my *OEdipus*.

OEdip. Wretch that I am! How ignorantly rash,
Have I denounc'd a Curse upon my self!

Joc. O! fright me not, my Lord; your Looks are
wild.

OEdip. Alas! I fear the Prophet fees too much; 255
But one thing yet remains to clear my Doubts.

Joc. I tremble, yet will answer what I know.

OEdip. Did he go forth in private, thinly follow'd;
Or like himself, incircled with a Guard?

Joc.

Joc. They were in all but Five, his Herald One; 260
And *Laius* singly in his Chariot rode.

OEdip. O murth'ring Demonstrations! one thing more;
Who brought the News of his Disaster back?

Joc. One of his Foll'wers, who escap'd unhurt.

OEdip. And does he still attend our Court and Ser-
vice? 265

Joc. No; But returning with the fatal News,
And seeing you fix'd on his Master's Throne,
He took me by the Hand, and humbly beg'd
I would dismiss him to some Rural Office;
That he but rarely might be seen in *Thebes*. 270
I granted his Request; for that and more
Was due to his Deserts and faithful Service.

OEdip. Give Orders that he do attend us strait.

Joc. He shall be sent for; but for what, my Lord?

OEdip. I'm haunted with bad Fears, Things have been
said 275

Disturb me, and I must be satisfied.

Joc. Well, he shall come; But may I not have leave
To ask what Cares torment your anxious Mind?

OEdip. Since you have giv'n Assurance to my Hopes,
I will disclose my Pain; for oh! *Jocasta*, 280
Where can I rest my Sorrows but on thee?
Know, *Polybus* of *Corinth* was my Sire;
My Mother *Merops*, of *Dorian* Extract:
I at their Court in high account was held
As Son, and eldest Subject: till it happen'd, 285
(A Chance, that ministred to my Surprise,

Because

Because my Bearing gave no Scope to Slander;)
 That, at a Banquet, one, o'er-wrought with Wine,
 In the blunt rudeness of his Cups reproach'd me,
 And said, I was not Native to the Throne,
 But only an adopted Heir of *Corinthus*
 The matter gall'd me much; and all the Night
 I struggled hard to keep Disquiet down:
 Till the next Morn, I to my royal Parents
 Disclos'd the thing that chaf'd me; They resent'd
 The sland'rous Words, and rated the bold Drunkard.
 Now, tho' their kind Indulgence pleas'd me much,
 Yet the Surmise sunk deep into my Breast,
 And fester'd all within; therefore unknown
 To them, I journey'd to the *Pythian* Dome,
 To ease my doubting Heart; but the harsh God,
 Dumb and regardless to the thing I sought,
 Denounc'd a Series of undreaded Horrors:
 That I was doom'd with Incest to pollute
 My Mother's Bed, and thence produce a Race
 Should startle Nature: Next, t'increase my Guilt,
 I with my Father's Blood should stain my Soul.
 With the fierce Threats alarm'd, I from that Hour
 Made from the Stars that pointed my known Course
 To the *Corinthian* Land; and fled t'avoid
 The black Accomplishment of such Predictions.
 But, flying, I approach'd that place of Guilt,
 In which, you said, your King and Husband fell.
 There, O *Jocasta*, I must tell thee all,
 Scarce enter'd I the triple-wending Road,

E'er I an Herald met; and close behind
 A Man, most like to him thou hast describ'd,
 Drawn in a Chariot: When, th' officious Hind
 That rode before the Carr, and next his Master,
 Strove forcibly to rob me of the Path,
 Stung with th' Affront, I struck the forward Slave,
 And keeping onward, the intrag'd old Man
 Twice on my Head lash'd with his rowel'd Whip.
 Not for my unperforming Passion dally'd,
 But, with my Staff, dealing a furious Blow,
 I fell'd him headlong from his Seat to Earth:
 And then upon his Followers wreak'd my Vengeance.
 Now if the dire Resemblance of the Fact
 Determine this for *Laius*, does there live
 On Earth a Wretch more hated amongst Men?
 Or more th' Abomination of the Gods?
 For neither Foreigners, nor *Thebans* born,
 Must in their hospitable Domes receive me;
 Or greet me with a Word of soft Condolance!
 But thrust from ev'ry Roof, I must endure
 The Burthen of that Curse my self impos'd;
 Then have I with Pollution wrong'd the Bed
 Of him I slew? On the redoubled Horrors!
 Am I not all one Stain? Ev'n if I fly,
 It must be still, in Banishment, from home;
 No, never, must I that lov'd Soil revisit,
 Lest my fell Hands should do the destin'd Murther
 On *Polybus*, my Father! Lest I rush
 With riotous Heat upon his widow'd Queen,
 And

And whore my Mother ! Who that dares to censure, 345
But must on Fate, and on th' unequal Gods,
Lay all the Guilt, and *OEdipus* acquit ?
Let me not, O ye sacred Pow'rs of Heav'n !
Let me not see the Day, but rather perish,
Be snatch'd from Earth, than live to be o'erwhelm'd 350
With Shame and unsupportable Pollution !

Chor. My Lord, we feel the Burthen of your Fears,
But till they're better grounded, hope the best.

OEdip. Alas ! my Friends, all my reserves of Hope
Are fix'd on what this Herdsman shall report. 355

Joc. What have you purpos'd, when he comes, my
Lord ?

OEdip. I'll tell thee, Love ; if he but hold the Tale
I heard from thee, then all my Cares are hush'd.

Joc. What pleasing Circumstance did I produce ?

OEdip. Thou said'st, that he reported *Laius* fell 360
By Robbers ; if he still assert a Number
Concern'd in the Assault, then I am safe.

(For One, and Many, makes a wide Distinction :)

But if a single Hand destroy'd the King,
My Guilt is manifest, and Ruin follows ! 365

Joc. Be certain his Relation answer'd mine :

Nor will he dare retract from a Report
Which not I only, but all *Thebes* have heard.
But should he deviate from its first Contents,
Yet *Laius'* Death, my Lord, will still be wide 370
From what the God foretold, that he should perish
Beneath a Son of mine : For that poor Infant,

To

To disappoint Prediction, was destroy'd.
 Wherefore, for what the Oracles have menac'd,
 Lose not a Thought in search of Certainty. 575

OEdip. Right, my *Jocasta*; yet forget not, Love,
 But send and summon this same Fellow hither.

Joc. With all Dispatch, but, good my Lord, retire;
Jocasta will not put a Thought in Act,

That is not grateful to her *OEdipus*. 380

(*Exeunt OEdipus and Jocasta.*)

ACT III. SCENE V.

CHORUS.

I.

O may it ever be my Fate,
 Justly those sacred Truths to rate;
 And those blest Laws that have their Rise
 From Wisdom, lodg'd above the Skies.
 Those, which th'Olympian King alone 385
 Dictates from his eternal Throne,
 (Unlike to those weak Mortals frame,)
 Live unabolish'd, still the same!
 Sprung from the God, replete with heav'nly Fire,
 They baffle Time, and keep their Strength entire. 390

II.

The Tyrant, and illegal Man
 From Pride, and rash Contempt began;

Pride

King of THEBES.

43

*Pride and Contempt that lift him high
O'er Mountains of Impiety;
Till plac'd aloft he dazzled grows, 395
And in his Fear his Hold foregoes.
O! may the City's Cares succeed,
Nor envying Fates their Search mislead.
With ardent humble Pray'rs the Gods I'll move;
The Gods shall still my kind Protectors prove!*

III.

*But whoe'er in Word or Deed
Does from the sacred Laws recede,
No divine Resentments fearing,
Nor the hallow'd Shrines revering,
If licentious Ease beguile him, 405
If dishonest Gains defile him,
If he pursues corrupting Pleasure,
Or grasps at unpermitted Treasure,
Some rigid Doom his Guilt o'ertake!
Else who hereafter will controul 410
The Sallies of his impious Soul?
If no avenging Judgments shake
The Triumphs of the dissolute,
'Tis time th'instructive Chorus be mute.*

IV.

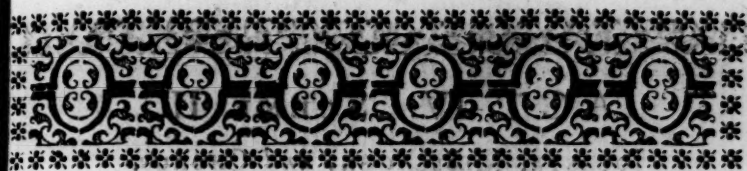
*Let mistaking Zeal no more 415
The Truth of Oracles adore;*

No

*No more to th' Lycian Temples pressing,
 Or th' Olympian God addressing,
 If Apollo do not right him
 On the impious Doubts, that slight him:
 But thou, Eternal Jove! that bearest
 Rule universal; if thou bearest
 The dire Neglect, avenge thy Son.
 For all th' Orac'lous Truths of old,
 That were to wretched Laius told,
 Have lost their Credit and Renown.
 Apollo's Honours sink apace,
 And all the Deity gives place!*

End of the Third ACT.





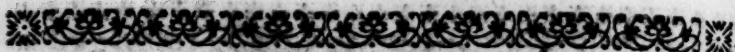
ACT IV. SCENE I.

Jocasta and CHORUS.

Joc. **Y**E Rev'rend Heads of *Thebes*, I have determin'd

With Incense, and these Chaplets to atone,
 And supplicate the blest Celestial Pow'rs.
 For *Oedipus*, oppress'd with many Cares,
 Distracts his anxious Soul; nor like a Man
 Furnish'd with Wisdom and superior Reason,
 Collects, or rates the present by the past:
 But hangs on ev'ry ghastly Tale of Horror.
 Nor has Admonishment reliev'd his Mind;
 But Pray'rs and friendly Comforts been rejected. 10
 Therefore to thee, O *Lycian* King, I fly;
 To thee, thou next Redress! I humbly bend,
 And beg a Deprecation of his Sorrows.
 For all the State sickens in his Distress,
 And like a Ship, robb'd of her Pilot, mourns. 15

ACT



ACT IV. SCENE II.

JOCASTA, MESSENGER, and CHORUS.

Mess. Can you instruct a Stranger, Sirs, to find
The Palace of the royal *OEdipus*?

Or rather, where himself is to be found?

Chor. Within this regal Dome the King resides,
And thither is retir'd: But this fair Dame
Is call'd his Wife, and Mother of his Children. 20

Mess. Blessings upon her! and surrounding Joys
Still glad the dwelling of his Royal Consort!

Joc. The like Prosperities return on thee,
The just Reward of thy fair omen'd Speech! 25
But say, what Cause of Moment brought thee hither?

Mess. Joy to this House and its Imperial Lord.

Joc. What Joy dost thou infer, and whence descending?

Mess. From *Corinth*, Lady; but, in brief, I bring
Pleasures corrected by a gentle Sorrow.

Joc. What are they? Speak, inform my doubting Mind.

Mess. The *Isthmos* (as I heard on my Departure)
Design t'elect your *OEdipus* their King.

Joc. Does not old *Polybus* still govern there?

Mess. The good old King rests in his peaceful Tomb. 35

Joc. What say'st thou, Stranger? Is the Monarch dead?

Mess. If I deceive you take my forfeit Life.

Joc. Fly, swift as Thought! Inform my royal
Lord [To her Attendant.

I have

I have a Secret will revive his Soul.

O, where are all th'Oraculous Terrors now, 40

And where the Faith we owe them? Scar'd by Trifles,

My Lord, in Exile, left his native Land.

T'avoid the Guilt of murth'ring *Polybus*:

Who still is dead, tho' *OEdipus* was absent.



ACT IV. SCENE III.

OEDIPUS, JOCASTA, MESSENGER, and CHORUS.

OEdip. Dearest *Jocasta*! O my Heart's sweet Pleasure! 45

Why hast thou call'd me forth, to what intent?

Joc. To listen to this Man, and from his Words

To learn th'Importance of Orac'lous Bugbears.

OEdip. Who is the Stranger? And what Tydings bears he?

Joc. He comes from *Corinth*, sent to let thee know 50
Thy Father *Polybus* no longer lives.

OEdip. What say'st thou? Ha! Explain thy Message,
Friend.

Mess. If Confirmation on my Words depends,
Be satisfied, my Lord, He is no more.

OEdip. Fell he beneath some Traytor's guileful Hand, 55
Or yielded to the Rage of harsh Distempers?

Mess. Death need but lay his leaden Mace on Age,
And Slumbers follow ———

OEdip. ——— Then he dy'd of Sickness?

Mess.

Mess. Gently decaying; and born down with Years.

OEdip. O ye great Gods! Why should the World,

Jocasta, 60

Run madding after Prophecies and Fate,
From whisp'ring Altars, or from cackling Birds;
When these vain Babblers, giving Fear th'Alarm,
Presag'd that I was doom'd to kill my Father?

And yet he dy'd, and I have still been here; 65

Distant from him, and guiltless of his Fate:

Unless the Sorrow of his absent Son

Hasten'd his End; for so he dy'd by Me!

So, *Polybus* is slain! and with him dye

Th'important and accomplish'd Oracles! 70

Joc. Was I not then a Prophet? —

OEdip. ———— Oh! thou wert;

But Fears and Prepossessions sway'd my Soul.

Joc. Shake off th'uneasie Guests for ever now.

OEdip. Must I not dread th'Embraces of a Mother?

Joc. What has the Man to fear whom Fate o'er-rules? 75

When Foresight cannot aid, but oft deceives,

'Tis best to live as thoughtless as we may.

You must not labour with imagin'd Incest:

Men oft have in their Sleep enjoy'd their Mothers;

Yet shaking off the guilty Dream with Night, 80

Laugh'd at the Coinage of fantastick Slumbers.

OEdip. I might commend th'Advice, if she who
bore me

Were not in being; but as yet she lives,

Tho' thou wert all Persuasion, I must fear.

Joc. Your Father's Death pleads strongly 'gainst your
Fears. 85

OEdip. But Mother's Life awakens new Distrust!

Mess. Who is this Object of your Fears, my Lord?

OEdip. Why, *Merope*, old Man; late the chaste Wife
Of *Polybus* —

Mess. ——— But whence these Fears of her?

OEdip. Because the God has threatned ugly Horrors. 90

Mess. May I enquire th' Import of his Predictions?

OEdip. Thou may'st. The scaring Oracle foretold
That I was doom'd to spill my Father's Blood,
And with incestuous Arms embrace my Mother:
For this I have estrang'd my self so long 95
From fatal *Corinth*: Happily, I hope;
Tho' sweet it be to dwell beneath the Smiles,
And taste the Comforts of paternal Fondness.

Mess. Was this the Cause of your Retreat from *Corinth*?

OEdip. T'avoid the Guilt of Parricide, my Friend. 100

Mess. What if my coming set you free, my Lord,
And dispossess these Peace-disturbing Cares?

OEdip. Thus shall the Arms of Gratitude be stretch'd
To clasp thee to my Bosom. —

Mess. ————— Sure I came

T'invite you to a glad return to *Corinth*. 105

OEdip. Oh! never, whilst I have a Parent there.

Mess. My Lord, your jealous Fears o'erbear your Reason.

OEdip. In what? For Heav'n's sweet sake instruct my
Errors.

Mess. If you on these accounts decline our Land.

D

OEdip.

OEdip. I tremble lest the God fulfil his Threats. 110

Mess. Lest you commit an Outrage on your Parents?

OEdip. Ay, that, old Man, that gives me constant Anguish.

Mess. But are not your Suspicions light and groundless?

OEdip. How, if I am their Son? —

Mess. ————— But *Polybus*

Was not in Blood akin to you, my Lord. 115

OEdip. What say'st thou, Man? Why; did he not beget me?

Mess. No more than I did.

OEdip. ————— Could he be my Father, And not beget me?

Mess. ————— Sir, indeed he did not.

OEdip. Why did he then vouchsafe to call me Son?

Mess. He, as a Gift, receiv'd you from these Hands. 120

OEdip. And lov'd me, 'cause receiv'd from other's Hands?

Mess. His Fondness from his want of Children follow'd.

OEdip. And was I bought, a Present for your King? Or from your Children cull'd to this Promotion?

Mess. I found you in *Citharon's* woody Vales. 125

OEdip. What Cause had led you to that lonely Place?

Mess. I there presid'd o'er the Mountain Herds.

OEdip. Didst thou frequent it as an Hireling Shepherd?

Mess. Blest was my Service that I rescu'd you!

OEdip. From what Misfortune? What oppressing Danger? 130

Mess. Thy wounded Feet bear Witness to thy Sufferings. *OEdip.*

OEdip. O! you have to my tortur'd Soul recall'd
The Mem'ry of that antiquated Sorrow!

Mess. I loos'd you from the painful fest'ring Cords.

OEdip. O dire Abuse! What did my Childhood suffer!

Mess. From that harsh Fortune was your Name impos'd.

OEdip. Say, did my Sire or Mother use me thus?

Mess. I know not; he, who brought you, best can tell.

OEdip. Did you receive me from another's Hands,
Or found you me your self?

Mess. ————— My Lord, I did not; I40
Another Herdsman to my Care bequeath'd you.

OEdip. Canst thou remember who that other was?

Mess. He was reputed one of *Laius'* Servants.

OEdip. Of him, who late possess'd the *Theban* Throne?

Mess. The same. He tended on the Monarch's Herds. I45

OEdip. Does he yet live? May I behold his Face?

Mess. You of the Land can best inform the King.

OEdip. If any present have e'er seen the Man,
The Shepherd whom he speaks of, either here
In *Thebes*, or on our Pastures, teach me, Sirs: I50

The Time demands him, and he must be found.

Chor. Doubtless, my Lord, 'tis he you sought but now;
That beg'd to be dismiss'd and lives retir'd:

But your *Jocasta* best can guide us here.

OEdip. Canst thou inform us, Love, if it be him I55
This Man intends, whom we but now have summon'd?

Joc. Whom can he mean? O give not way, my Lord,
To fresh Distrusts, or credit rash Surmise.

OEdip. Forbid it, Heav'n, when I have trac'd so far,
That I should cease, e'er I my Birth have found. 160

Joc. Now, by the Gods, if you regard your Life
Or After-Peace, renounce the vain Enquiry:
Already I am sick of heavy Cares.

OEdip. Tho' I am found a Slave in three Descents,
Twill not reflect on thee; fear not, *Jocasta.* 165

Joc. Let me conjure you to forego your purpose.

OEdip. Not 'till I am resolv'd in ev'ry Doubt.

Joc. I have my Reasons, Sir; and counsel well.

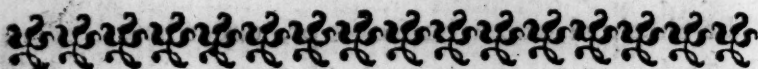
OEdip. Counsel is Poison that controuls my Will.

Joc. Oh! *OEdipus*, my much unhappy Lord! 170
O may'st thou ne'er discover who thou art!

OEdip. Go some, and bring this Herdsman to me strait,
But let Her still boast of Her high Descent.

Joc. O fatal Monarch! — But I can no more;
'Tis the last Greeting of our mutual Sorrows. 175

[*Exit Jocasta hastily.*]



A C T IV. SCENE IV.

OEDIPUS, MESSENGER, and CHORUS.

Chor. Why is the Queen, my Royal Lord, retir'd
With such disorder'd Speed, and inward Sadness?

Alas! I tremble lest some dire Event
Ensue from her conceal'd Distress of Soul.

OEdip. Let her high Spirit have way: I stand resolv'd, 180
However

However mean, to search my Parents out :
 Perhaps she fears, lest some ignoble House
 Should claim my Birth, and shock her Female Pride.
 But looking on my self as Fortune's Son,
 I triumph in her Gifts, and can disdain 185
 The Infamy of a Plebeian Lot.
 The Goddess may dispose her future Son ;
 And Time that made me Great reduce my Grandeur.
 Since I have gone so far, I'll not desist,
 'Till I have trac'd my dark Original. 190

Chor. *If I foresee the Will of Fate,*
By the Regent of the Skies,
E're the Morrow's Sun arise,
Thou, Cithæron, shalt relate,
Whence our OEdipus arose ; 195
And all the Honours of his Birth disclose.
Then shall our future Songs proclaim,
And ring to Heav'n Cithæron's Name ;
Cithæron ! whence the lovely Tidings came.
Thou, Phœbus, didst the Search inspire ; 200
Oh ! fulfil thy blest Desire.

What Pow'r Divine begot thee, Son,
What fair Nymph of heav'nly Race,
Suff'ring Mountain Pan's Embrace,
Bearing thee, the Theft did own ? 205
For all Cliffs and steepy Heights
Are sacred to the rural God's Delights..

Did Bacchus, or did *Hermes* rove
 Some *Heliconian Nymph* to prove,
 And stamp'd thee in the Hour of yielding Love? 210
 For Bacchus oft the *Dryads* courts,
 And with blooming Beauty sports.

OEdip. If I from Circumstance and distant View
 May guess, my Friends, the Shepherd we have sought
 Now meets our Eyes: A long and suiting Age 215
 Warrants my Thoughts, and says it must be He.
 Besides that those, who lead him to our Presence,
 I know to be my Servants. Thou perhaps
 Hast elsewhere seen him, and canst better tell me.

Chor. My Lord, be certain that I know this Man 220
 Was one of *Laius's* most faithful Herdsmen.

OEdip. Say, my *Corinthian* Friend, is this the Man
 Your late Discourse concern'd?

Mess. ————— My Lord, 'tis he.



ACT IV. SCENE V.

OEDIPUS, MESSENGER, SHEPHERD, ATTENDANTS, and
 CHORUS.

OEdip. Hear you, old Man; nay, turn your Eyes on me,
 And answer me to what I shall demand: 225
 Did you not once belong to Royal *Laius*?

Shep. I was his Servant, not a purchas'd Slave;
 But born and nourish'd in his friendly Household.

OEdip.

OEdip. How didst thou serve him? What was thy Employ?

Shep. The grazing Business was my greatest Care. 230

OEdip. Where didst thou chiefly tend thy num'rous Flocks?

Shep. On Mount *Citharon*; and the neighb'ring Lawns.

OEdip. Hast thou not then somewhere beheld this Man?

Shep. What Man, my Lord?

OEdip. ——— This, who confronts thee here.
Hast thou not once been conversant with him? 235

Shep. I cannot charge my Mem'ry with his Knowledge.

Mess. 'Tis not a Wonder, Royal Sir; but I,

By strict Occurrences of ancient Date,

Shall rowse the lost Remembrance of these Features.

I know, his 'waken'd Soul must recollect, 240

That when on wide *Citharon's* outstretch'd Plains

He o'er two Flocks presided, I o'er One,

Our Stations were most near; and we together

From blooming Spring to the decline of Autumn,

Spent the long friendly Days: and when the chill 245

Approach of Winter warn'd us in our Cotts

To house the Herds, I to my private Fold

Drove my small Trust, but he his larger Flocks

In *Laius'* Coverts stabled. Speak, old Man,

Was it not thus, or do I talk in Fables? 250

Shep. Tho' far remote in Time, I own the Truth.

Mess. Come on then; you remember, to my Care

An Infant you intrusted, and with Pray'rs

Befought me, as a Foster-Child to rear it?

Shep. Oh! Wherefore is that Circumstance reviv'd?

Mess. This was that Infant, Friend, I took in Charge.

Shep. Perdition choak thee! Wilt thou not be silent?

OEdip. Forbear these Execrations, rash old Man;
Thou rather dost deserve to stand accurst.

Shep. Most Royal Master, how have I offended? 260

OEdip. Why dost thou not confess that Infant-Charge?

Shep. He does not know th'Event of his rash Questions.
If fair Entreaties will not make thee speak,
Force shall oblige thee. —

Shep. ————— Oh, for Mercy's sake,
Do not with Tortures wound this Age-worn Body. 265

OEdip. Bring hither Irons; haste; bind the trifling
Traytor.

Shep. O my distracting Thoughts! What must I say?

OEdip. Did you that Infant to his Hands deliver?

Shep. I did; Would I had dy'd in that glad instant!

OEdip. Slave, thou shalt die, unless thou speak the
Truth. 270

Shep. Alas! my Lord, I said I gave it him.

OEdip. From whence hadst thou the Boy? Was he
thy own?

Or didst thou from some other's Hand receive him?

Shep. He was not mine: I had him giv'n to me.

OEdip. From whence? What House? Which of our
Subjects Hands? 275

Shep. O let me, by the sacred Pow'rs above,
Let me conjure you, Sir, press me no farther.

OEdip. Wretch, if I ask thee once again, thou dy'ft.

Shep.

Shep. The Child was of the Family of *Laius*.

OEdip. Born of some Slave, or of the Royal Line? 280

Shep. Alas! What Horrors must I now disclose!

OEdip. And I be curst to hear! Yet hear I must.

Shep. 'Twas said to be the King's; but your *Jocasta*
Can best unravel this mysterious Secret.

OEdip. But did she give it thee?

Shep. ————— She did, my Liege. 285

OEdip. And to what End?

Shep. ————— With Orders to destroy it.

OEdip. What, her own Child?

Shep. ————— An Oracle of Dread
Foreran his Birth, and authoriz'd his Doom.

OEdip. As how?

Shep. — 'Twas said, that he should kill his Parents.

OEdip. Why didst thou then deliver it to him? 290

Shep. Compassion for the Child had stir'd my Soul,
Thinking he to some foreign Land would bear it

Far from its native Soil: But he, it seems,

Has ill preserv'd, and rear'd it to Misfortunes:

For, oh! if thou art that once dreaded Infant, 295

A guilty Fate hangs o'er thy wretched Head.

OEdip. O cursed hour! Then all my Crimes are blown;

O hated Light, I will no more behold thee!

Who unpermitted stole into the World;

Defil'd my Soul with sacrilegious Murther, 300

And plung'd unseeing int' incestuous Horrors.

[*Exeunt OEdipus, Messenger, Shepherd and Attendants.*]



ACT IV. SCENE VI.

CHORUS.

Frail State of Man! thy living Lot I deem
 Like nothing, or a Shadow's Dream;
 He who to Fortune spreads his Sails,
 And swells with her successful Gales, 305
 Who, in opinion grown, is Great,
 Soon is becalm'd and drops from all his State!
 From thy Example, King, from thy Success,
 And the strange Vicissitude
 Of al't'ring Time, I must conclude 310
 Fate ne'er sincerely did a Moral bless.
 How the busie Voice of Fame
 Did thy wond'rous Worth proclaim!
 How blest! How mighty! when thy Skill
 Did the voracious Monster-Virgin kill! 315
 When from the Ravager thou Thebes didst free,
 Fortune smil'd, and Honour woo'd thee,
 Glad Supremacy pursu'd thee,
 Purple Pomp and Royalty!
 But who more wretched in thy present State? 320
 Who more o'erwhelm'd in a tempestuous Fate?
 Spent and o'er-labour'd with inherent Woe?
 Oh! Oedipus! How great, how blest but now!
 But Incest and Pollution bear thee down:

The nuptial Bed, that held the Father and the Son! 325

How could the injur'd Bed so long

In Silence bear the Father's Wrong?

All-seeing Time the latent Guilt reveals,

And the unlicens'd Match reveals:

At once an Husband and a Son, 330

Nature condemns the complicated One!

Offspring of Laius, would these Eyes

Had never seen thy Miseries;

To thy Distress these Complaints I owe,

And gushing Tears unbidden flow : 335

Once I thy Glories view'd with glad Surprise;

*Now, startled at thy Shame, I downwards turn my
Eyes.*

End of the Fourth ACT.





ACT V. SCENE I.

MESSENGER and CHORUS.

Mess. **O** Ye most honour'd Lords of wretched *Thebes*,
What horrid Acts must pierce your wound-
ed Ears,

And blast your Eyes! What Sorrow swell your Breasts,
If *Labdacus's* House still claim your Care!

Not all the Streams of *Ister*, all the Waves 5
Of *Phasis*, can suffice to wash away
The rank Pollutions which this Roof infolds,
And covers yet from Knowledge: But too soon
The voluntary, yet compulsive Crimes
Shall force their way to Light, and stand disclos'd. 10
But Mischiefs, that from willing Rashness flow,
Still wound us deepest. —

Chor. ————— The severe Distress
We have already known oppress'd us much:
What dire Increase of Sorrow dost thou bring?

Mess. To keep your Pain no longer in Suspence, 15
Know, that divine *Jocasta* is no more.

Chor. O wretched Queen! What Fate hath snatch'd
thee from us?

Mess. Her self undid her self; retir'd from View
Of ev'ry Eye, the fatal Act was done;

But

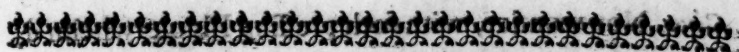
But as my Mem'ry serves to what I heard, 20
 You shall be taught the Process of her Fury.
 No sooner had her wild and frantick Rage
 To the Imperial Chamber wing'd her Feet,
 But on the Nuptial Bed she threw her Body,
 And with her Hands tore off her lovely Hair. 25
 Thence, starting up, flung to the jarring Door;
 And with shrill Voice call'd on her murder'd Lains :
 Reproach'd him with the Fate-forbidden Son
 By whom he fell; and left her widow'd Arms
 To be usurp'd by Guilt, and chaste Pollution! 30
 Then wept the fatal Bed, that had produc'd her
 An Husband from an Husband! that had bore
 Sons by her Son, the Fruits of impious Joys!
 What after follow'd, e'er her Death I know not;
 For *OEdipus*, loud as the raging Seas, 35
 Burst in upon us; call'd our Eyes from her,
 And fasten'd 'em on his more portly Sorrow.
 While with long Strides he travers'd the wide Room,
 And with distemper'd Accents crav'd a Sword:
 Ask'd for his Wife, his, and his Childrens Mother! 40
 Thus as he rav'd, whether some God inspir'd,
 (For we, like Statues, dumb and speechless stood;)
 But with an hideous Cry, as if possess'd,
 He from the Hinges threw the starting Doors,
 And to the inward Chamber forc'd his way : 45
 There we the wretched Queen aloft beheld
 Hanging, and strangled with an hated Cord.
 Whom when he saw, he from his inward Soul

Fetch'd

Fetch'd a deep Groan, and flew to break the Noose.
 Then, on the Floor, he dash'd his prostrate Body, 50
 With all the Anguish of distracted Sorrow!
 There, O the force of horrid Resolution!
 He, from the Breast of his *Jocasta's* Robes
 Tearing the golden ornamental Hooks,
 With their steel'd Points dug at his sacred Eyes; 55
 Crying, he could no longer bear to see
 Her, his own Woes, or impious Deeds that caus'd 'em!
 But, that by Darkness guarded from all Crimes,
 He would hereafter banish and shut out
 Each guilty Object, and impure Desire. 60
 Thus, with repeated Clamours, he went on;
 And from their Seats wrench'd out the Balls of Light,
 Whose bleeding Strings stain'd all his mangled Face;
 Nor did alone a Stream of putrid Gore
 Follow the Wounds: but strong and gushing Show'rs 65
 Of red discolour'd Tears drove down his Cheeks!
 Nor did a single Sorrow urge his Hands;
 But for himself and Wife, himself he punish'd!
 Their Joys, their Triumphs, and their real Glories,
 That late enrich'd their Days, in one curst Hour 70
 Are turn'd to Groans, Destruction, Death, and Shame,
 And ev'ry Form of Ills, that Man can think of!
Cho. How did you leave the wretched Prince employ'd?
Mess. He cries aloud t'have all the Portals open'd,
 That *Thebes* may see the cruel Parricide! 75
 Th'incestuous Wretch that stain'd his Mother's Bed!
 With other horrid things I fear to utter.

Then

Then says, he must and will depart the Land;
Nor stay, in *Thebes*, accurst and self-devoted!
But begs th' Assistance of some leading Hand,
For his Afflictions bow him to the Earth;
But soft, you will be Witness of his Anguish;
The Doors are open'd, and you straight will see
A piteous object, that would melt the stern
And flinty Breast of Hate to soft Compassion. 85



ACT V. SCENE II.

The SCENE opens from the Palace, and discovers OEdipus led forth, with his Eyes blinded and bloody. The Chorus range themselves on each side of the Stage.

OEDIPUS and CHORUS.

Chor. O Sight of Woe! O dire Effects of Rage,
More rueful than these Eyes e'er yet beheld!
What Fury seiz'd thee, most unhappy King?
What cruel Pow'rs have on thy former Ills
Heap'd new Distress, and loaded thee with Griefs 90
Beyond the Limits of Calamity?
Alas! I'm wounded with thy strong Afflictions.
I've many things to say, struggling for Vent;
Many, my Soul desires to know of thee;
But looking on thee, I my purpose lose;
Struck dumb with Fear and Pity. — 95

OEdip. O, my Heart!

O wretched *OEdipus*! where art thou now?

Where

Where do I wander? whither does the Voice
Of my tumultuous Moan ascend unheeded?

O my fair Fortunes, whither are you fled? 100

Chor. Sunk into dire, unutterable Horrors!

OEdip. O this detested, never-ending Night!

O State of strong, unconquerable Darkness!

O doubly curst! —Subdu'd with pricking Pains,
And stung with conscious, thought-tormenting An-
guish! 105

Chor. Nor wonder, with such pressing Ills o'erwhelm'd,
That you should feel the Weight of both Afflictions!

OEdip. Art thou there, Friend? and can'st thou still be
kind?

Still hold the same untainted loyal Duty,
And hover round this blind and helpless Man? 110

Lost to these Beamless Eyes, I know thee yet;
So well my Ear retains thy faithful Accents.

Chor. O dreadful Work of Rage! what angry God
Seduc'd thee to prophane thy precious Eyes?

OEdip. *Apollo*, Friends; *Apollo* wrought these Ills! 115
And all my glaring Mischiefs set to view!

But these performing Hands alone fulfill'd
My stern Resolves: Wherefore should I have Eyes,
That, looking round, could view no Glimpse of Joy?

Chor. I must confess, Delight indeed was fled. 120

OEdip. Is there on Earth that thing that I could see,
Or hear, or covet, or address with Pleasure?

O, no, my Friends; —Quick, drive me from the Land,
Your worst Destruction; one that stands accurst,

Grievous to Man, and hated by the Gods! 125

Chor. How Sorrow doubles when so sharply felt?
Had Heav'n so pleas'd, would I had never known thee!

OEdip. Curst be th' officious Wretch, whoe'er he was,
That from my Feet loos'd the corroding Bands;
Snatch'd me from Death, and rear'd me to Dishonour! 130
Have I a Cause to thank him for my Rescue?
For then I should have dy'd, secure from Guilt;
Nor cost my self, or Friends, this pressing Anguish.

Chor. I wish the Gods in Mercy had decreed it.

OEdip. Then I had kill'd no Father; nor with Incest, 135
Like a foul Thief, robb'd my fair Mother's Virtues;
But now I am most vile, the Sire to Shame;
Who have begot a Race on her that bore me!
If Vice have its Degrees, behold the Fiend
In all her ugliest Shapes of Horror here! 140

Chor. I know not how t'approve your desp'rate Course,
'Twas better not to live, than live in Darkness.

OEdip. O say not, I have err'd in my Repentment;
Or strive to sooth my grimed Soul to Peace:
I know not with what Eyes I could have bore 145
To meet my injur'd Father's Ghost below:
Or glare upon my pale dishonour'd Mother:
'Gainst whom, my Offences call for more than Death!
Could I with Joy gaze on my growing Children,
And not remember my once guilty Pleasures? 150
Could I with these polluted Eyes have view'd
The Walls, the Tow'rs, and awful Shrines of Thebes,
This Parent-Soil that has indulg'd my Manhood?

From

From which my own rash Sentence has expell'd me,
 Charging you all to thrust th' unhallow'd forth; 155
 The Man condemn'd by Heaven, and injur'd *Lains*!
 Could I with upright Eyes, and daring Front,
 Have fac'd my known and branded Infamy?
 No, *Thebans*, no; Could I with angry Force
 Have damm'd the Entrances of Hearing up, 160
 And marr'd that Work of Nature; I would then
 Have been as dull of Ear, as blind of Eyes:
 For Loss of Sense is Sorrow's greatest Comfort.
 O why, *Citharon*, did'st thou once receive me?
 Or not with Frosts have kill'd me, when receiv'd? 165
 Then the dire Secret of my Birth had slept!
 O *Polybus*! O *Corinth*! And ye Realms,
 I once thought Native! What a Leap'rous Soul
 Ye harbour'd, hid beneath a gracious Form?
 But now I am one black, detected Horror; 170
 O triple-wending Road, ye gloomy Woods!
 Ye Shrubs, ye fatal and contracted Paths
 That drank the Blood, the Father's Blood, I spilt;
 Do you retain the Marks of that Pollution,
 Or know the Crimes I've since committed here? 175
 O fatal Womb! that gave me to the Light;
 And after took me back to your dark Chambers,
 Suff'ring me there t' engender Sons and Brothers,
 Daughters and Sisters! *Chaos* of Relation!
 Confus'd the Wife and Mother! Broke Distinction, 180
 And tore up Nature, with promiscuous Love!
 O therefore I conjure you by the Gods,

Haften

Hasten to thrust me forth, to hide, or kill me;
 Or hurl me down into the friendly Depth
 Of Seas, that will not give me back to Sight: 185
 Come, dare to end a Man o'ergone with Woes;
 Obey without a Fear: I have a Load
 That none but *OEdipus* could bear, and live!

Chor. Creon, my Lord, approaches; he can best
 Advise, or execute, what you require; 190
 For all your Pow'r devolves alone on him.

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ACT V. SCENE. III.

OEDIPUS, CREON, and CHORUS.

OEdip. Alas! How can I frame my Speech to him?
 Or how rely on him to do me right,
 Whom I have Injur'd with unjust Detractions?

Creo. I come not, *OEdipus*, t'insult your Ills; 195
 Or swell the Weight of Sorrow with Reproach:
 But, Men of *Thebes*, tho' slightly you regard
 Your Country's sanctity; O yet revere
 The sacred Sun's all-feeding Hallow'd Fires;
 Nor let Pollution thus uncover'd stand, 200
 Which neither Earth, the Sky, or Light can suffer:
 But bear him to the Palace with all Speed.

'Tis fit, his Kindred, with condoling Eyes,
 Alone should view the Spectacle of Woe.

OEdip. O *Creon*, since thy Vertues have deceiv'd 205
 My base Opinion; and that thou, in Goodness,
 Do'st condescend t'approach this vile, fall'n Man;

By

By the just Gods, I beg that you would hear me,
Since that which I would say, concerns you most.

Creo. What is it, you so earnestly would have? 210

OEdip. That thou would'st speed me hence to some
lone Place,

Where I may quite be lost to Human Commerce.

Creo. Be sure, it must have been so; but that I
Have first determin'd to consult the God,
How we must treat you. ———

OEdip. ——— Wherefore that Delay? 215
Is not the dreadful Oracle most plain?

Th' unhallow'd Parricide must be destroy'd!

Creon. But yet the present State of things requires,
That we should take the Counsel of the God.

OEdip. What? on a Wretch as I am?

Creo. ——— For thy Fate 220
Has giv'n a Sanction to *Apollo's* Words.

OEdip. Let me conjure thee then, (command, I cannot)
Give her, that lies within, some decent Burial:
(To thee the Kindred Obsequies belong.)

Nor let the State of *Thebes* e'er condescend 225

Me living to admit within her Walls:

But suffer me to spend my remnant-Days

On my *Citharon*; on the Mount design'd,

Of old, by both my Parents, for my Tomb:

And leave me there to dye, as they decreed. 230

But well I know, Sicknes, nor raging Pain,

The Hand of Robbers, nor the Teeth of Lions,

Could have destroy'd me, e'er I had fulfill'd

The destin'd Mischiefs I was born to do.
 Now, let my future Fate be what it will; 235
 But, *Creon*, burthen not my helpless Age
 With my Sons Care: their sturdy Sex will strive,
 And baffle thro' Adversity for Bread:
 But for my Girls, those poor and tender Orphans,
 That still have known the Sweets of Regal Plenty, 240
 And been the Partners of my flowing Fortunes;
 My Heart bleeds for 'em! — O permit me, *Creon*,
 To fold them in these Arms, and mourn their Sufferings;
 Grant it, O King of *Thebes*; thou gen'rous Youth!

[*Creon makes Signs to a Servant, who goes out.*

Touching 'em, I shall feel a Father's Joy, 245
 As great as when I saw.——Ha! by the Gods,
 My Ears are false, or I already hear
 The poor afflicted little ones in Tears;
 And *Creon*, pitying a Father's Fondness,
 Has sent my dearest Children? — Tell me, Friends. 250

ACT V. SCENE IV.

OEDIPUS, CREON, *Servant with* ANTIGONE and
 ISMENE, *the two young Daughters of OEDIPUS, and*
 CHORUS.

Creo. You're not deceiv'd: knowing the tender Love
 You always bore 'em, I have brought 'em to you.

OEdip. Heav'n's bless you for this Kindness! And the
 Gods

Protect

Protect you better than they e'er did me !
 Where are you, Daughters ! O come near and touch 255
 These Brother's Hands, that made your Father's Eyes
 Thus dark ; whose Balls were once, like yours, tran-
 sparent ! :
 Your Father, that unknowing of his Guilt,
 Got you on her, of whom my self was born !
 Tho' see I cannot, yet I weep your Fortunes ; 260
 To think, how scorn'd your later Days must prove ;
 To what Assemblies, to what *Theban* Feasts,
 Shall you repair, but that, returning home,
 You shall in Tears pay for the short-liv'd Pleasure !
 And when your ripen'd Years inspire your Breasts 265
 With Love, where shall you find a willing Consort ?
 Who will so lightly hold his Son's fair Name,
 As to receive Dishonour to his House ?
 The Portion of intail'd Disgrace, which hangs
 Upon you from your Sire ! — What Branch of Shame 270
 Attends us not ? your Father kill'd his Father !
 Defil'd his Mother with licentious Love,
 And receiv'd you, the Products of his Incest !
 This shall be your Reproach : Who then will court
 Your ignominious Nuptials ? None, my Girls ; 275
 But Desolate, and Barren shall you live ;
 And to the Grave descend unblest with Offspring !
 But Oh ! forbid it Heav'n ; forbid it, *Creon* ;
 (For thou art all the Parent now is left them ;
 Those that they had from Nature, are no more :) 280
 Let 'em not grow distress'd and needy Wand'ers ;

Contemn'd for Want; or solitary Virgins.
 Nor let 'em feel the Burthen of my Sorrows!
 But view their Infant Years, their helpless Childhood;
 And stretch the Hand of Pity o'er their Weakness. 285
 They have no Help, but what must come from thee.
 O therefore reach to me thy gen'rous Hand;
 And plight thy Faith for their assur'd Protection.
 O Daughters, were your Years and Judgments ripe
 For Counsel, much I could advise your Youth. 290
 But pray to the Great Gods, that they may shed
 Successive Blessings on your future Years;
 And make you happier than your wretched Sire;

Creo. No more, my Lord; suppress this Head-strong
 Sorrow:

Let us go in.

OEdip. ———— Tho' loth, I must obey. 295

Creo. We must submit to what the Times require.

OEdip. Can'st thou devine, with what Desire I labour?

Creo. Your Tongue can best interpret your Desires.

OEdip. O, I would fain be banish'd from this Land!

Creo. You ask no more than what the Gods enjoin. 300

OEdip. But I am grown the Hatred of the Gods;

Creo. Therefore the sooner must obtain your Doom.

OEdip. May I believe you?

Creo. ———— Never have I yet

Suffer'd my Tongue to wander from my Heart.

OEdip. O then conduct me from this fatal Place: 305

Creo. Come on! let go the Children.

OEdip. ———— Take not from me

These

These Comforts.——

Creo. ——Nay, indulge not fond Desires :
The Pleasures you have tasted, had their End.

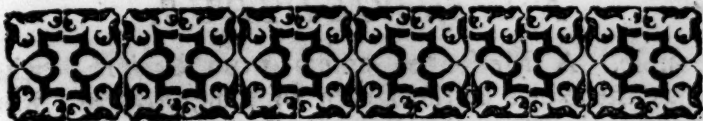
[*Creon leads OEdipus into the Palace*
Servant follows with the Children.

Chor. Thebans, behold this *OEdipus*; whose Name,
Once Glorious, was the darling Theme of Fame : 310
Who the dark Riddles of dire *Sphynx* explain'd,
And the decreed Reward of Empire gain'd :
Who of Desert and Regal Honours proud,
Look'd down on Fortune, and th' ignoble Croud.
Till the rough Tempest of unsteady Fate 315
Rush'd on his Grandeur, and o'erwhelm'd his State !
Taught by the Change, let no rash Man depend
On Fortune's present Smiles, but mark his End :
Howe'er renown'd, we none must happy rate,
Till Death secures 'em from th' Insults of Fate. 320

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F I N I S



NOTES

UPON

OEdipus, King of Thebes.



HIS Play of *OEdipus* had the additional Title of (*ὁ τύραννος*) *the King*, given it by the Grammarians of later Times; to distinguish it from the Second *OEdipus* of *Sophocles* call'd *Coloneus*. The Subject of this TRAGEDY is, the Enquiry after the Murtherers of *Laius*, the Discovery that it was *OEdipus* alone did the Fact, and the Consequences of that Discovery in *OEdipus's* Misfortunes. I cannot give a better Abstract of the Contents of this Poem, than is already done to my Hand by Mr. DACIER in his Notes upon ARISTOTLE's *Art of Poetry*. The Scene opens, says he, with a Sacrifice which a great Number of *Thebans* are making in the Court of *OEdipus's* Palace. That Prince enters, and to comfort the People, tells them, that he had sent *Creon* a long time ago to enquire of *Apollo's* Oracle at *Delphos*, the means of making the devouring Pestilence cease; upon which *Creon* arrives and relates what the Oracle had said: *OEdipus* sends for *Tiresias* to explain it. The Prophet at first refus'd to do it; but provok'd at last by the severe Carriage of *OEdipus*, he accuses him of the Murther of *Laius*: *OEdipus* imagines that 'twas *Creon* made him do this: *Creon* complains of this Injustice, so the two Princes quarrel: *Jocasta* comes in to appease them, and endeavours to remove the Uneasiness, which the Reproach that was cast on *OEdipus* gave him; but all that she said serv'd only to augment his

E

Trouble

Trouble. A Messenger enters from *Corinth*, who brings the News of the Death of King *Polybus*, who was thought to be his Father; and to remove some Fears which he had upon account of his suppos'd defiling his Mother's Bed, he tells him, that the King and Queen of *Corinth* were not his Parents; he was resolv'd to know that Matter thoroughly, and enquires of the Shepherd, who alone was able to give him a perfect Account of his Misfortune. The Shepherd leaves him no room to doubt of all his Crimes, and then he punishes himself.

OEdipus is look'd upon by Mr. DACIER to be the best Subject for Tragedy that ever was; for whatever happen'd to that unhappy Prince, has this Character; 'tis manag'd by Fortune; but every Body may see, that all the Accidents have their Causes, and fall out according to the Design of a particular Providence. He has in another place call'd it the finest Tragedy of all Antiquity. And Mr. KENNET in his *Lives and Characters of the ancient Greek Poets*, speaking of *Sophocles's* Conduct and Expressions, subjoins, that the first of these Virtues has made his *OEdipus* the general Rule and Model of true Plotting. However as excellent as it is in its kind, and as much as it has been esteem'd by the Ancients, *ἡ τῆς οἰκίας τὸν φιλολέγε, ὡς φησι Δικαίρχος*; he had the Prize bore from him by *Philocles*, as *Dicaearchus* relates.

As the Scenery of this Tragedy is mark'd by the Scholiasts to be very artful, and the Constitution applauded; so there are great Improbabilities in the Subject: of both which I shall take Notice in the Course of the subsequent Notes.

Notes upon the First ACT.

[Verse 1. *Ye Sons of Thebes.*] The Scholiast observes that the Poet has distinguish'd *OEdipus*, in his Manners, to be a Lover of his People, and studious of their Welfare; which Character express'd at the opening of the Scene, begot the Esteem of the Audience, and bespoke their Compassion.

Y. 3. *These Boughs of Supplication.*] It was the general Custom amongst the Ancients for their Petitioners both to Gods and Men, to go adorned with Garlands, or with Green Boughs in their Hands; sometimes both, as in this Instance. The reason of which Ceremony the second Scholiast tells us, was ἵν' αἰδέσῃ μοι δοκοῖεν τοῖς θεοῖς καὶ ἀνθρώποις, *to beget Respect from those whom they addressed*: And these Boughs were either of Laurel or Olive, because both those kinds are ἀσθαλεῖς, *not subject to wither*; and the Laurel was a Sign of Prevailing, the Olive, of Appeasing.

Y. 4. *From the Exactions.*] As the Rise of OEdipus's Power in Thebes is built upon the Fable of Sphynx, and that her Riddles are frequently alluded to by Sophocles in this Poem: I will give my self a little more Scope in examining this Fiction from the Opinions of those Authors, who have entred into the Enquiry after her. To trace her first in her Fabulous Existence, we must begin with the Description of her Person from the second Scholiast on our Author, who says, ἴσμεν δ' ὅτι ἡ Σφίγξ εἶχε πρόσωπον καὶ κεφαλὴν κόρης, σῶμα κυνός, πτερὰ ὄρνιθος, φωνὴν ἀνθρώπου, ὄνυχας λέοντος. *You must know that Sphynx had the Face and Head of a Virgin, the Body of a Dog, the Wings of a Bird, the Voite of a Man, and the Claws of a Lion.* Thus she stands for a direct Monster of Prey, and such has Mr. DRYDEN represented her in the first Act of His and Mr. LEE's OEdipus. But the Scholiast upon Hesiod tells us, *that in Reality she was a Female Robber, and had many Assistants in Rapine with her*; πραγματικῶς μὲν γυνὴ καὶ ληστὴς καὶ εἶχε πολλὰς σὺν αὐτῇ τὰς συνεργάζοντας. Tzetzes upon Lycophron is of the same Opinion, and teaches us further, that her monstrous Form was only given her significantly from her Qualities, ἐκινδύνισαντο δὲ αὐτῇ λέαιναν, διὰ τὸ φονικὸν, ὄνυχας γρυπὸς ἔχειν διὰ τὸ ἀρπακτικόν, πτέρυγας αἰετῶ, διὰ τὸ τὰς σὺν αὐτῇ λησδύοντας πανταχὲ περὶτρέχειν συντόμως, καὶ ἀναρεῖν τὰς ἐκδύοντας. *they figured her a Lioness, from her Thirst of*

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Blood

* The same has been done by Shakespeare in his Richard 3rd

Blood; with the Claws of a Griffin, from her rapacious Course of living; and with the Wings of an Eagle, from the celerity of her Comrades in surrounding and surprizing all Passengers: Not to trouble my self with what Diodorus (lib. 14.) avers, that the Sphinges, were a species of Animals, of the Ape Kind, &c. I shall proceed to relate that *Sphynx* took up her Quarters on the high and craggy Mountain *Sphingium*, near *Thebes*, and from thence made her Attempts on Travellers: Not but that, by the way, this Mountain derived its Names of *Sphingium*, *Sphicium*, & *Phiceum*, in all probability from her Residence thereon; for *Sphynx* was likewise call'd Φίξ by the *Bæotians*, as in *Hesiod*.

Ἡ δ' ἄρα Φίξ' ὁλοῦν τίκε Καδμείοισιν ὄλεθρον.

As to her propounding her Riddles, the Rewards propos'd by *Creon* to such as should expound them, and *OEdipus's* Success therein, they are Circumstances too well known to dwell on further. Those who are inclined to think the whole a Mystery couch'd under a Fable, may take *Nat. Comes* along with them, in *Mythol.* lib. 9. chap. 18.

§. 83. Th' appointed Day.] The Return of *Creon* is very artfully contriv'd to connect the Scenes; and *OEdipus*, as the Scholiast observes, desiring the Answer of the Oracle should be pronounc'd in Publick, preserves the Kingly Character, in preferring the Interest of his People; and at the same time not thinking himself concern'd in the Crime, prosecutes the Enquiry after *Laius's* Murtherers, and promotes the Business of the Tragedy.

§. 122. Did *Laius*—meet his Death?] The Enquiry of *OEdipus* concerning *Laius's* Death, seems to lye open to the same Remark which I have made on the 18th Verse of the second Act of the *Electra* of *Sophocles*; to which I beg leave to refer my Readers. *Aristotle* in his *Poeticks* has given it for an indispensable Rule, that, 'tis absolutely necessary that among all the Incidents which compose the Fable, no one be without Reason; (but he seems

seems to have put in an Excuse for Sophocles, in the subsequent Terms;) or if that be impossible, it ought to be so order'd, that that which is without Reason be always out of the Tragedy, as Sophocles has prudently observ'd in his OEdipus. Mr. DACIER's accurate Note upon this Passage, sets the Critick in a much clearer Light. As there are Subjects which cannot be manag'd without using these Incidents, which Aristotle calls without Reason, he says, that they ought to be placed out of the Tragedy, that is, out of the Action which makes the Subject of the Piece, and made use of, as Sophocles does of that which is without Reason in his OEdipus. 'Twas without Reason that OEdipus should be so long married to Jocasta, and not know in what manner Laius was kill'd, nor make any Enquiry after the Murtherers; but as that Subject, which is otherwise the finest in the World, could not subsist without that, Sophocles did not think fit to omit it; but has plac'd it out of the Action, which he has taken for the Subject of his Piece: that Incident is related as a thing already done, and which precedes the Day of the Action. The Poet is answerable, only for those Incidents which enter into the Composition of his Subject, and not for those which precede or follow it.

¶. 133. Did not hire, &c.] The Original is, εἰ τι μὴ ξυὼ ἀργύρῳ ἐπεχόρε?, which the Cambridge Edition of Sophocles, printed in 1668. has render'd thus, Si ille non pecuniâ Onustus iter faciebat, if he did not travel with a Charge of Money: But I have follow'd the Interpretation of both the Scholiasts upon the Place, εἰ μὴ ἐπὶ κέρδει. τίνας δὲ τῆτο εἰς Κρέοντα, ὡς αὐτῷ σωθεῖσθαι τὸ τῷ Λαίῳ Φοβεῖ, διὰ τὴν βασιλείαν. If it were not for Gain; for this Speech is levell'd at Creon, as if he had been consenting to, and had contracted with the Murtherer of Laius, to gain the Crown himself.

Enter the Chorus.] The learned Mr. DACIER seems mistaken in the Chorus of this Tragedy, for taking notice that the Priest of Jupiter, follow'd by a great many other Priests, &c. make the opening of the Scene; he sub-

joins, and when the Subject is well explain'd, the Priests themselves make the Chorus of the Piece: The contrary whereof appears to me very plain, especially if we may depend on the Scholiasts. *τιθανή η εισοδὸς τῷ χορῷ συνέπλεον γὰρ φησι δὲν μὲν τῷ δήμῳ δεῖ τῶν πραγμάτων. — ἔχουσιν αἰετὸς παρὰ δὲ ὅπερ ἦλθεν. ἀμα δὲ καὶ ὑπὲρ τῷ χορῷ εἶναι ἐτέρῳ ὑποκριτῇ. —* *Et postea, κατὰ τὴν προαῖτιν τῷ βασιλεῷ παρέσει πρεσβύτεαι τινες, ἐξ ἧν ὁ χορὸς συμπληρεται.* The Entrance of the Chorus is probable and well prepar'd. for the King (sends for and) says he must confer with his People on the Matter. The Priest goes out, having done what he came to do, and withal to give room for a fresh Actor. — Subsequent to the King's Command come certain antient Thebans, of whom the Chorus is made up.

Notes upon the Second ACT.

Verse 37. *On me and mine.*] The Scholiast justly remarks, that it moves Compassion very strongly to hear OEdipus unknowingly curse himself twice, if he knew the Murtherer.

§. 54. *The Authors of his Death.*] The Greek is τῷ λαβδακίῳ πατρὶ, πολυδῶρε τι καὶ τῷ πρόθε κάδμῳ, τῷ πάλαι τ' ἀγνώστῳ. i. e. Of *Laius* the Son of *Labdacus*, the Son of *Polydorus*, the Son of *Cadmus*, the Son of *Agenor*. I cannot conceive the meaning of *Sophocles*'s inserting the Genealogy of *Laius*, which was of no Concern to the Audience, and gives OEdipus's Expression an Air of Stiffness and Pedantry: 'Tis as formal, as if calculated for some particular Purpose; and put me in mind of *Abraham* begat *Isaac*, &c.

§. 76. *Creon counsel'd.*] There is a particular Art belonging to the Theatre, which is call'd *The Preparation of Incidents*; of which this *Second Act* of OEdipus is very full, as is obvious to every one who is acquainted with the Theory of the Stage. *In multis OEconomia Comitorum Poetarum isā se habet, ut casu putet Spectator venisse*

venisse quod Consilio Scriptorum factum sit, says Donatus upon Terence. The OEconomy of the Comick Poets is frequently such, that the Spectator may think that Event casual, which is designed by the Writer. The Rule holds in Tragedy and Epick Poetry: and Scaliger praising Virgil for his Art in this Point, has these Words, *ubique vero aliquid jacet seminum ad futuram Messem*, he every where scatters Seeds for a future Harvest. The Abbot of Aubignac has writ an entire Chapter, in his whole Art of the Stage, upon this Head, and which he concludes thus. *But the main thing to be remembred, is, that all that is said or done as a Preparative or Seed for things to come, must have so apparent a Reason, and so powerful a Colour to be said and done in that place, that it may seem to have been introduc'd only for that, and that it never give a Hint to prevent those Incidents which it is to prepare:* I was peculiarly called to this Criticism, by an Intimation of the Scholiast, τὸ δ', κρέοντος εἰπόντος, πιθανὸν εἰς τὰ ἐξῆς, ἵνα ἡ νόστος αὐτῷ πρὶν ἔχῃ, τὸ πεπεισμένον ὑπὸ τοῦ κρέοντος ὅτι τρεῖς ἄνδρες μαντεύονται καὶ τὸ Ὀιδίποδος τὰ ψαδῆ. But the Words Creon counsell'd, make the Sequel probable, that OEdipus's Suspicion of him might obtain Credit, that Tiresias was suborn'd by Creon to prophecy Falsities to blacken OEdipus.

Ÿ. 147. *Then Passion shall have room.*] The Poet thro' this whole Scene of OEdipus and Tiresias endeavours at establishing the King's Manners, and Character: He would describe a Man, that is passionate, violent and rash; he always keeps in that Character, what is proper and necessary for the Subject; and enhances it by all the Embellishments it is capable of.

[Ÿ. 329. *Corinth's Heir.*] The Scholiast takes Notice, that the Chorus are very reasonably puzzled, to devine what Differences had fell out betwixt the Son of Labdacus, and Polybus; for as yet they look'd upon OEdipus to be the Son of Polybus. εἰκότως ἀπερῶσι ποῖον γὰρ νεῖκε γένοιτο τοῖς ἀπὸ Λαβδάκου πρὸς τὸν Πόλυβον, ἔτι γὰρ νομίζουσιν αὐτὸν εἶναι Πελοπόννησον.

Notes upon the third ACT.

Verse 1. *Ye Men of Thebes.*] The Contrivance of this Act, both in the Scenary and Prosecution of the Plot is admirable. The Entrance of *Creon* is easy and natural; *OEdipus* had thrown Suspicions on him, which reflected highly on his Honour, and he longs to clear himself before those, who had been Witnesses of the Calumnies: *OEdipus*, who had been sufficiently disturb'd by *Tiresias*, and given way to Suggestions against *Creon*, hears him come to apologize for himself, and in the Ferment of his Rage, comes forth to upbraid him personally of Falshood: The Warmth and Loudness of their Dispute alarms *Jocasta*, who, fearing the Consequences, enters with Design either to reconcile them, or prevent Danger.

Ÿ. 188. *When I have enquir'd.*] The Scholiast remarks, that after *Creon* had left the Stage, *Jocasta*, with a World of Probability, enquires into the Cause of the King's and his Variance; which is done likewise to introduce the first Remembrance and unraveling of the Plot. *πιθανως, μη τὸ διηλλάχθαι αὐτὸς ἐπιζητεῖ τὴν αἰτίαν· ἅμα δὲ ὥστε ἵνα ἀρχὴ γένηται τῆ ἀνασινωρικοῦ.*

Ÿ. 219. *Laius had once an Oracle.*] I cannot sufficiently admire the Art and Fatality of *Jocasta's* Kindness in this Scene; she labours to release *OEdipus* from the Anxiety he was under upon Account of some terrible Predictions, by telling him how fruitless and unaccomplish'd an Oracle her former Husband had once given to him from the *Tripes*; but in her Story unhappily recounts Facts, which call some fearful Circumstances to *OEdipus's* Mind, and involve him in fresh and more horrible Distractions.

Ÿ. 309. *Made from the Stars.*] The Greek is, ἀστροῖς τοῖς κορινθίαις for the future, measuring the *Corinthian* Land by the Stars. And the old Scholiast upon the place says, ἡ δὲ μεταφορὰ ἀπὸ τῶν πελάγῃ μετρήσασθαι

ὡς ἂν δι' ἄστρον τεκμαιρομένων τ' πλῆν. *It is a Metaphor borrow'd from those that traverse the Seas, who by the Stars are taught the Course of their Navigation. I remember an Expression of Virgil's Palinurus, very like this of Sophocles.*

Si modo ritè memor servata remetior astra. Æn. V. 25.

Ÿ. 417. *No more to th' Lycian Temples pressing.*] The Original is. εἰς τὸ ἁδᾶσι ναόν, nor to the Temple at Abæ; and Ἀδᾶι, τῆς Λυκίας ἐνθα ἱερὸν εἰς Ἀπόλλωνος, Abæ, was a Place in Lycia where Apollo had a Temple, says the Scholiast; but the learned Dr. Potter thinks him sufficiently refuted, in that we read of an Oracle of Apollo, at Abæ, a City of Phocis, mention'd by Herodotus, and Stephanus the Byzantian; by the latter of which we are told, it was more ancient than the Delphian. Pausanias and Diodorus, make mention of an Abæ, a Town of the Locrenses Epicnemidii; and Stephanus, of one, a City of Caria: Mr. Lloyd in his *Lexicon Geographicum*, mentions several others taken notice of by different Authors.

Notes on the Fourth ACT.

Ÿ. 12. *To thee, thou next redress!*] The Original is, ἄγχις γὰρ εἰ, for thou art nearest: On which the old Scholiast thus flourishes, γυμνάσιον εἰς ἀθήνησιν ἐνθα Ἀπόλλων τιμᾷ. ἄγχις γὰρ εἰν, καθὼς ἔ' πόρρω τ' Ἀττικῆς αἰθῆσαι. ἢ καὶ ἐν θῆβαις ὁμώνυμον ὡς γυμνάσιον Λυκεῖα Ἀπόλλωνος. There is a Gymnasium at Athens, consecrated to Apollo; he is stil'd Nearest therefore, because Thebes was not far distant from Attica: or else there was a Gymnasium at Thebes, that was likewise under the Protection of Lycian Apollo. If I might presume to call in Question these learned Opinions, I would venture to say Sophocles had no such Meaning. That *Jocasta* invoc'd Apollo merely as Θεὸς ἀποτρέπου, a Deity that averted Evils; and he might reasonably be address'd to

as *ἀγχις*, or Nearest on two Accounts: either as he then shone over her Head, and so was present; or, as he was likewise *πρόστατος*, a Deity which presided over and protected Houses, and therefore had Images erected to him in the Porches: I have been pretty particular on the Custom of addressing the Sun to deprecate Frights arising from Dreams, in my Note on the 129th Verse of the Second Act of *Electra*; which perhaps may serve as a Supplement to this Remark.

§. 29. From Corinth, Lady.] Aristotle in his Poetics, explaining the *Peripetia* in a Tragedy, says, It is a Change of one Fortune into another, contrary to what was expected, and that Change happens either necessarily or probably. This Change in *Oedipus* is certainly very happily contriv'd, for as Mr. DACIER remarks, a Man from Corinth comes to acquaint *Oedipus* of King *Polybus*'s Death, that he might go and take Possession of that Kingdom. *Oedipus*, who thought that *Polybus* was his Father, and being afraid of committing Incest, as the Oracle had said he should, told him, that he was resolv'd never to go into any Place where his Mother was. The *Corinthian* answer'd, that 'twas very plain, he did not know himself, and that he disturb'd himself about nothing: And thinking to do him some signal Service, in bringing him out of his Error, he told him that he was not the Son of *Polybus* and *Merope*; which began the Remembrance, which cast him into the most horrible of all his Misfortunes. Thus did the Discourse of this *Corinthian* produce a Change of Fortune, not probably but necessarily.

§. 180. I stand resolv'd, &c.] *Oedipus*'s Manners are admirably well mark'd in this Act, for 'tis blind and rash Curiosity which makes his Misfortunes, and the unravelling of the Plot. *Plutarch* very aptly calls this Curiosity, an immoderate Desire of knowing every thing, and a Torrent which breaks down all the Banks of Reason which oppose it. It may not be improper to set down a Passage of his at length, because remarkable in it

it self, and relating to the Subject in Hand. Curiosity cast OEdipus into the greatest of all Evils, for being desirous to know who he was, because they reproach'd him for being a Stranger, He set forward to consult the Oracle, met with his Father, and kill'd him without knowing who he was; afterwards he married his own Mother, and by that became King of Thebes; and when he seem'd to be most happy, he had still a Desire to know more, concerning himself, altho' his Wife used all possible Endeavours to hinder him: But the more she strove to do it, the more he solicited a certain old Man, who knew all the Affair, threatening and forcing him by all the ways imaginable; so that at last the Business was so far reveal'd, that he began to have some sort of Suspicion; and then the old Man seeing himself oblig'd to declare every particular, cry'd out, alas! I am at last reduc'd to the cruel Necessity of Speaking: OEdipus transported with Passion, and trembling, answer'd, And I am reduc'd to the cruel Necessity of Hearing: But, speak. So much, so tickling is the Pleasure of Curiosity, and difficult to withstand; as an Ulcer, the more 'tis scratch'd, the more 'tis inflam'd and bloody; but he that is free from this Malady, and of an easie Temper, when he has neglected to hear some bad News, ought to say, O divine Forgetfulness of past Evils, how full of Wisdom art thou!

¶ 297. O cursed Hour!] Aristotle has observ'd, that the best Remembrance, is that which is found with the Peripetie, as in the OEdipus, on which Mr. DACIER amongst others, makes this Remark. The Subject of OEdipus furnish'd Sophocles with the best Remembrance the Theatre ever saw; for that Prince no sooner knew himself to be the Son of Laius and Jocasta, but of the most happy of Men, he became at once the most miserable.

Notes upon the Fifth ACT.

¶ 47. Hanging, and strangled.] Sophocles has made Jocasta hang her self on the Discovery of her Incest with her

her Son; but Euripides, Statius, and Seneca keep her alive, till after the mutual Death of Eteocles and Polynices in single Combat: As to Seneca's part, I ought to distinguish, that he has introduc'd her living in his Thebais; tho' he had before made her stab her self in his OEdipus. But in the former he had his Eye on Euripides, in the latter on Sophocles.

Ÿ. 174. *He cries aloud.*] The Scholiast observes that the Pretext is very natural for bringing forth OEdipus to shew the Audience the Distress of his Blindness, by making him say, that he would shew Thebes, how justly he had punish'd himself, for his Involuntary Misfortune, and how willing he was to depart the Land by reason of the Imprecations he had fix'd on himself: πιθανή η αἰτία τῷ ἐξίνααι αὐτὸν. ἵνα (φῃσι) δείξῃ τοῖς πολίταις ὅτι αἰεὶς ἰαυτὸν ἐτιμωρήσατο ἐπὶ ἀκαστοῖς παθήμασι καὶ ὡς μέλλον ἐκοντὶ ἐξίνααι τὴν πόλιν αἰετὰς ἀεὶ ἐφθασεν ἐν δαυμάδῳ.

Ÿ. 299. *Fain be banish'd from this Land.*] OEdipus in this Tragedy makes himself a willing Exile, but in the OEdipus Coloneus, he reproaches his Son Polynices with being turn'd out of Thebes by him.

Τὸν αὐτὸς αὐτὴν παλίστα τίνδ' ἀπ' ἡλασας,

Καθήκας ἀπολιν, —

V. 1351.

But I shall suspend the Examination of this point, till my Notes on that Play, and the Seven Captains before Thebes, of Æschylus.

Ÿ. 319. *Howe'er renown'd.*] The Scholiast takes Notice, that Sophocles paraphrases upon the Saying of Solon, which he made to Cræsus, when he shew'd him all his Wealth and Grandeur, and ask'd him if he did not think him very happy; to whom the Philosopher reply'd, ὡς εἰ καὶ πρὸς τελευτῆς ἀνδρὸς μακαρίζειν, that we ought not to judge a Man happy till his Death. The Story and the Saying are very well known, but I do not find Diog. Laertius take any Notice of the latter in his Life of Solon.

4 AP 54
F I N I S.

